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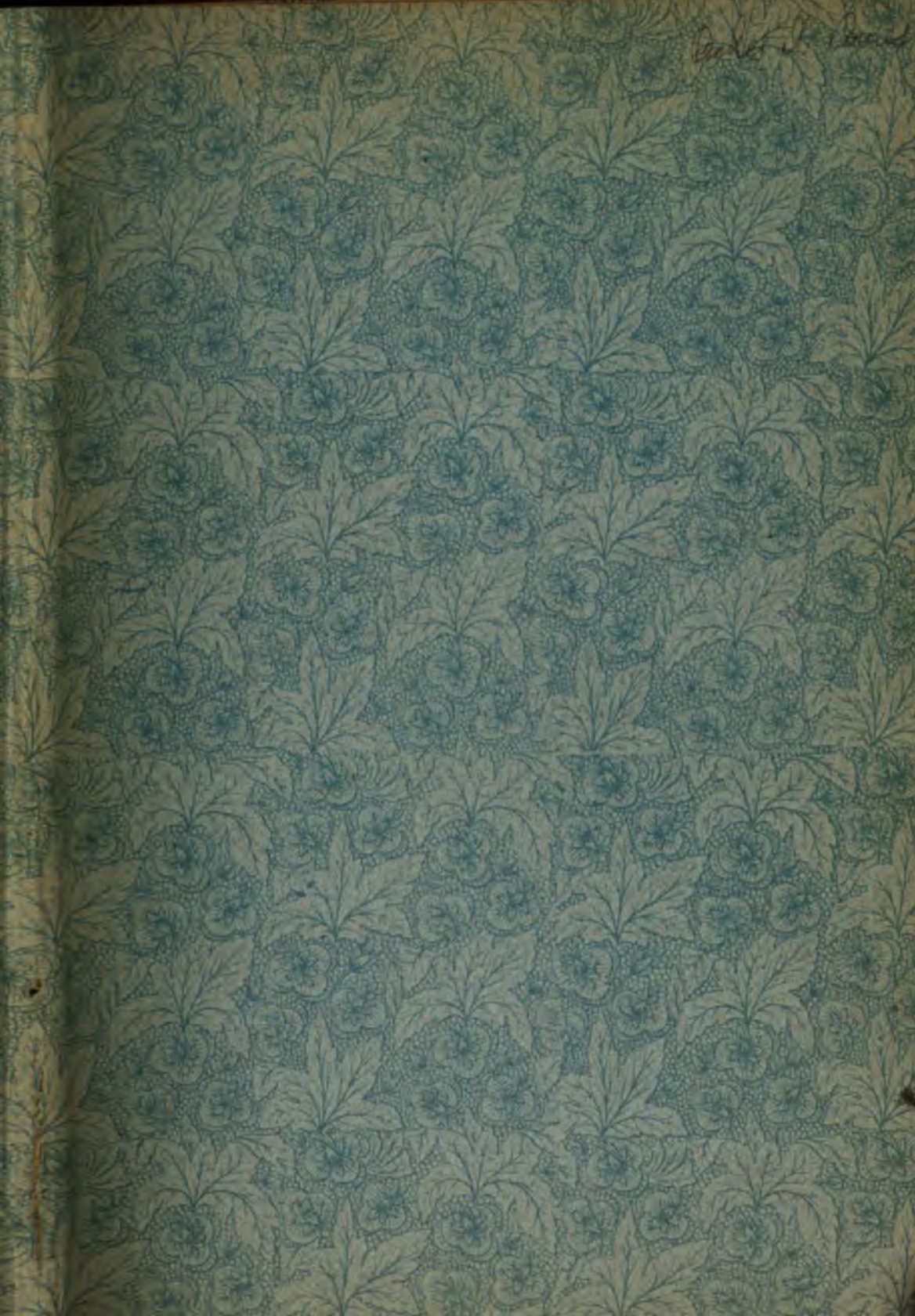
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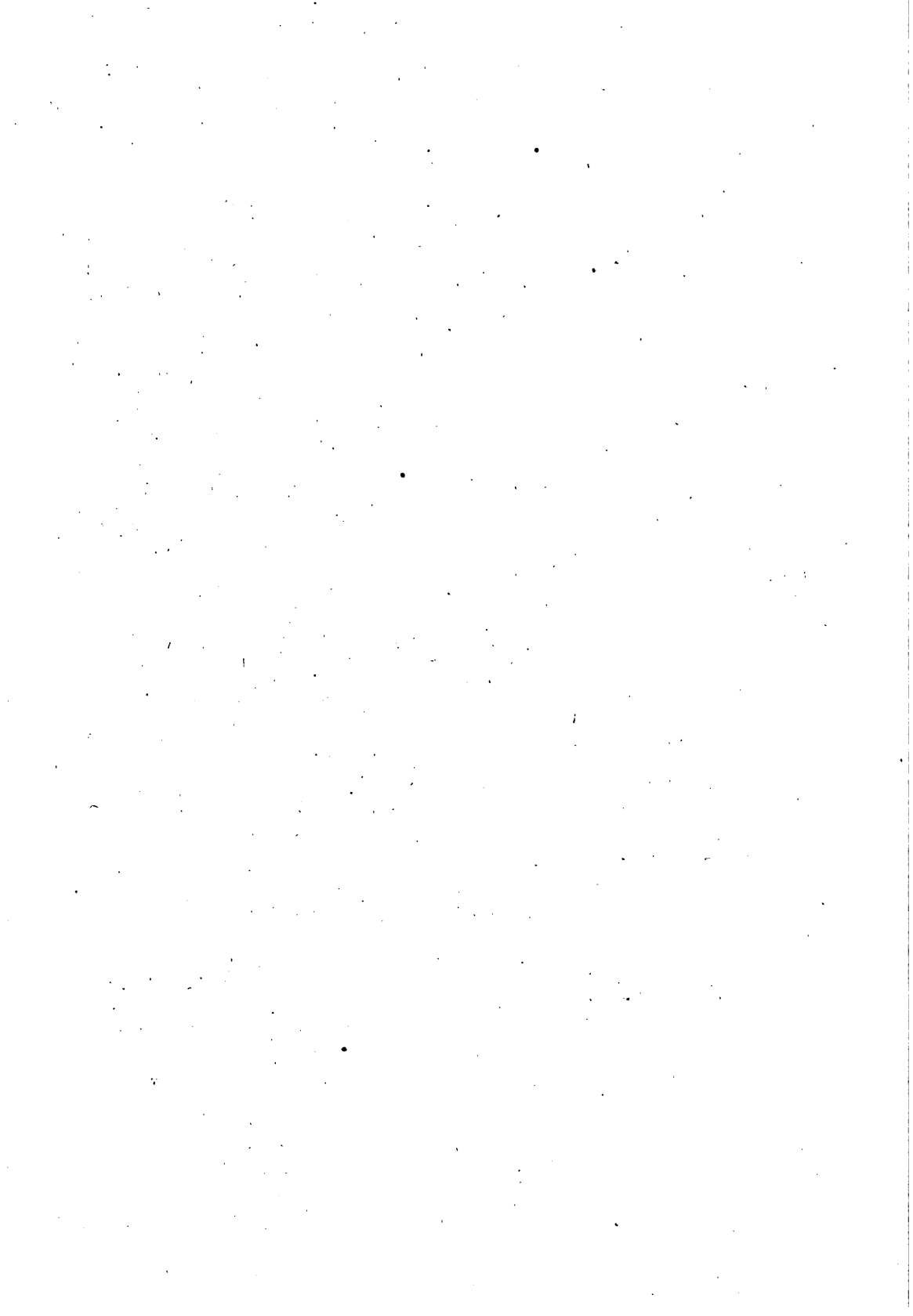
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A HISTORY
OF
AMERICAN LITERATURE

II.
1676-1765

BY
MOSES COIT TYLER

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

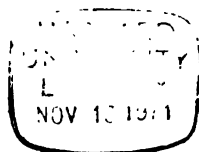
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SECOND COLONIAL PERIOD.

1676-1763.

AMERICAN LITERATURE.

SECOND COLONIAL PERIOD: 1676-1765.

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and Description.

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COTTON MATHER.
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AMERICAN LITERATURE.

SECOND COLONIAL PERIOD: 1676-1765.—*Continued.*

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SAMUEL WIGGLESWORTH.
ROGER WOLCOTT.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW ENGLAND: THE VERSE-WRITERS.

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- V.—Michael Wigglesworth, the sturdy rhymers of New England Calvinism—His great popularity—Puts into verse the glooms and the comforts of the prevailing faith—The realistic poet of hell-fire—"God's Controversy with New England"—"Meat out of the Eater"—"The Day of Doom"—Synopsis of the latter poem—Its wide diffusion and influence—His son, Samuel Wigglesworth, a true poet—"A Funeral Song" by the latter.
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- IX.—War-verses—Popular ballads—"Lovewell's Fight"—Tilden's "Miscellaneous Poems"—John Maylem, Philo-Bellum—His "Conquest of Louisburg"—His "Gallic Perfidy."
- X.—A group of serious singers—John Adams—His accomplishments and poetry—"Poems by Several Hands"—Peter Oliver, the literary politician—His poem in honor of Josiah Willard.
- XI.—"Pietas et Gratulatio"—Its occasion—Its authors—A burst of American loyalty to the English monarchs—Its Greek and Latin verses—Its English verses—Apotheosis of George the Second—Salutation to George the Third.

I.

I HAVE taken the year sixteen hundred and seventy-six as the year of partition between the two periods into which

our colonial age seems to fall. By a coincidence that is almost dramatic, that year proved to be one of spacious import for both the great English communities then planted in America, and then holding within themselves the types and the hopes of all possible English civilization in the new world. Alike for Virginia and for New England, it was a year in which most doleful mischief, long gathering force from the crimes and the blunders of men, came to its culmination, exploded, and passed away ;—a year of fright, of fury, of outcry and blood and battle-agony, and at last of the sort of silence that is called peace. In that year, Virginia saw the crisis and close of the patriotic insurrection of its own people under the hero, Nathaniel Bacon ; in that year, New England saw the crisis and close of the conspiracy of its exasperated Indians under the hero, Philip. For those two central English communities in America, and for all other English communities that should afterward be grouped around them or issue from them, the year sixteen hundred and seventy-six established two very considerable facts, namely, that English colonists in America could be so provoked as to make physical resistance to the authority of England ; and, second, that English colonists in America could, in the last resort, put down any combination of Indians that might be formed against them. In other words, it was then made evident that English colonists would certainly be safe in the new world, and also that they would not always be colonists. That year completed the proofs that a certain uncounted throng of articulating bipeds, known as Americans—together with the words that they should articulate—were to be endured on this planet, for some ages to come.

Let us turn away, now, from the significance of those events which, at the end of a long and troubled sequence, came to an issue in sixteen hundred and seventy-six, and glance for a moment at the men and women who, in that year, constituted the larger part of the population of the

English colonies. Here, at length, we confront a new race of beings under the sun : people who loved England, but had never seen England ; who always called England home, but had never been at home ; who spoke and wrote the English language, but had learned to do so three or four thousand miles from the island in which that language had been hitherto cooped up. Before sixteen hundred and seventy-six, the new civilization in America was principally in the hands of Americans born in England ; after sixteen hundred and seventy-six, it was principally in the hands of Americans born in America, and the subjects of such training as was to be had here. Our first colonial period, therefore, transmits to us a body of writings produced by immigrant Americans ; preserving for us the ideas, the moods, the efforts, the very phrases, of the men who founded the American nation ; representing to us, also, the earliest literary results flowing from the reactions of life in the new world upon an intellectual culture formed in the old world. Our second colonial period does more ; it transmits to us a body of writings, produced in the main by the American children of those immigrants, and representing the earliest literary results flowing from the reactions of life in the new world upon an intellectual culture that was itself formed in the new world.

Our first colonial period, just seventy years long, we have now studied with full and earnest care ; we have held up before our eyes the tattered and time-stained memorials of its literary activity ; we have listened attentively to its multitudinous voices, hushed by death two centuries ago. Each reader has now before him the materials out of which to construct for himself the praise, or the contempt, which he is willing to bestow upon that period. For my part, I have no apology to make for it : I think it needs none. It was a period principally engaged in other tasks than the tasks of the pen ; it laid, quietly and well, the foundation of a new social structure that was to cover a hemisphere, was to give shelter and com-

fort to myriads of the human race, was to endure to centuries far beyond the gropings of our guesswork. Had it done that deed alone, and left no written word at all, not any man since then could have wondered; still less could any man have flung at it the reproach of intellectual lethargy or neglect. But if, besides what it did in the founding of a new commonwealth, we consider what it also did in the founding of a new literature—the muchness of that special work, the downright merit of it—we shall find it hard to withhold from that period the homage of our admiration.

From the year sixteen hundred and seventy-six, when our first colonial period ends, there stretches onward a space of just eighty-nine years, at the end of which the American colonies underwent a swift and portentous change,—losing, all at once, their colonial content, and passing suddenly into the earlier and the intellectual stage of their struggle for independence. This space of eighty-nine years forms, of course, our second colonial period; and it is this which we are now to study.

For the most of this period, and for most purposes of investigation, our history is but a bundle of anecdotes telling of detached groups of communities,—each group working out its own life in its own way, and uttering in some fashion of frank speech its own uppermost thought. Here, at the farthest north, we rest our eyes upon the New England group of communities; thence, passing along the coast, we encounter the group of the middle colonies, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; finally, the southern group, Maryland, Virginia, the two Carolinas, and Georgia. Between the several members of each group there were, perhaps, special intimacies, domestic, commercial, military, religious; but between the several groups there were almost no intimacies at all.

Moving across this tract of time, we shall make research for whatever writings were produced within it by these clustered populations of Americans. It will be convenient

for us to begin with New England, and to proceed in geographical order southward.

Of nearly all the writers that we are now to deal with, it may be said that they did their most significant work within the limits which we have assigned to our second colonial period; and yet some of them, the eldest, began their work before that period began; and others, the youngest, perhaps continued their work after that period ended. In order to give a satisfactory account of them, we shall occasionally find ourselves flitting back, and committing trespass upon the territory which we profess to have abandoned, or even, it may be, advancing into that territory to which in this volume we shall not try to lay claim.

The topic that last engaged our notice, in the literary period just closed, was the verse-writers of New England; and this topic is the one with which we shall begin our study of the period now to be opened,—thus taking up the thread of the story at the very point where we laid it down. We became somewhat acquainted with the poet, Anne Bradstreet, the only person of an avowed and special vocation in poetry that New England had in its earliest age. The first two poets that we meet on the threshold of our new studies, were men who had grown up in New England under the influence of Anne Bradstreet's fame; who were, in some sense, her literary children; and who have left verses in praise of her, that constitute their own best title to praise.

II.

Of these two poets, one was John Norton, nephew of the famous Boston minister of the same name; born in 1651; graduated at Harvard in 1671; pastor of the first church at Hingham from 1678 till his death in 1716; during all that time publishing only an election sermon, in 1708, and still earlier, in 1678, a poem occasioned by the death of Anne Bradstreet. It is this poem, "A Funeral

Elogy upon that pattern and patron of virtue," that will preserve for him a high and permanent memory among the few real singers of our colonial time. We know not what else he did in verse; but, certainly, the force and beauty that are in this little poem could not have been caught at one grasp of the hand. His poetical strokes were by no means sure; the literary taint of the time had smitten him; and even in this sorrowful and stately chant, he once or twice slipped into grotesqueness of conceit, and funereal frivolity. Yet, here is something more than mechanic poetry, something other than inspiration of the thumb-nail. To this young American scholar and poet, just then at the opening of his active career, his mind brimming with the imagery of the antique classics, the death of Anne Bradstreet—their one glorious example of poetic power in New England—seemed to come as a sort of elemental loss, a bereavement and a darkening of the earth, at which the sky itself and all its splendid tenants would put on mourning. Therefore, with the fine exaggerating speech of his passion, he cries out:

“ Ask not why the great glory of the sky,
That gilds the stars with heavenly alchemy,
.
.
.
Ask not the reason of his ecstasy,
Paleness of late, in midnight majesty;
Why that the pale-faced Empress of the night
Disrobed her brother of his glorious light.
Did not the language of the stars foretell
A mournful scene, when they with tears did swell?
Did not the glorious people of the sky
Seem sensible of future misery?
.
.
.
Behold how tears flow from the learned hill;
How the bereaved Nine do daily fill
The bosom of the fleeting air with groans
And woful accents, which witness their moans.”

As he dwells upon it, her death seems so cruel a theft from the world of what the world could ill spare, that his grief passes into wrath:

"Some do for anguish weep; for anger, I,
That Ignorance should live, and Art should die.
Black, fatal, dismal, inauspicious day !
.

Be it the first of miseries to all,
Or last of life defamed for funeral.
When this day yearly comes, let every one
Cast in their urn the black and dismal stone.
Succeeding years, as they their circuit go,
Leap o'er this day, as a sad time of woe."

Then, as this indignant gust has uttered itself, he turns
in direct and reverent salutation to the dead poet, for
whom he mourns :

"Grave Matron, whoso seeks to blazon thee,
Needs not make use of wit's false heraldry ;
Whoso should give thee all thy worth, would swell
So high, as 'twould turn the world infidel.
.

To write is easy ; but to write on thee,
Truth would be thought to forfeit modesty.
.

Virtue ne'er dies : time will a poet raise,
Born under better stars, shall sing thy praise.
Praise her who list, yet he shall be a debtor ;
For Art ne'er feigned, nor Nature framed, a better.
Her virtues were so great, that they do raise
A work to trouble fame, astonish praise.
.

Beneath her fect, pale Envy bites her chain,
And Poison-Malice whets her sting in vain.
Let every laurel, every myrtle bough,
Be stript for leaves to adorn and load her brow :
Victorious wreaths, which, 'cause they never fade,
Wise elder times for kings and poets made.
Let not her happy memory e'er lack
Its worth in Fame's eternal almanac,
Which none shall read, but straight their loss deplore,
And blame their fates they were not born before."¹

¹ The entire poem is in "The Works of Anne Bradstreet," J. H. Ellis's
ed. 409-413.

Somewhat older than John Norton, but associated with him in poetic genius and in devotion to Anne Bradstreet, was John Rogers; a strong and famous man in his day; one of the early presidents of Harvard College; in his own person an example of that versatility of gifts which American life has always had in it some peculiar force to develop,—preacher, physician, linguist, scientist, educator, poet. In 1649, at the age of eighteen, he was graduated at Harvard College; from 1656 to 1683, he lived at Ipswich, physician both to the bodies and to the souls of men; in August, 1683, he was inaugurated as president of Harvard College; and on the second of July, 1684, during an eclipse of the sun, he died. The tradition of him brings to us a man of uncommon grace of mind and sweetness of temper, of all gentlemanly and scholarly accomplishments; in fact, “a treasury of benevolence, a storehouse of theologic learning, a library of the choicest literature, a living system of medicine, an embodiment of integrity, a repository of faith, a pattern of Christian sympathy, a garner of all virtues.”¹ Of course, his portrait hangs upon the walls of the “Magnalia,”²—a portrait to which is attached the inevitable Matheresque ear-mark, as follows. One day, while president of the college, it happened that his prayer in chapel was only about half as long as usual,—a phenomenon agreeable, doubtless, to the students, but quite inexplicable to them. Indeed, at the moment, no human being knew why that presidential prayer had come to an end so soon; but, as Cotton Mather judiciously remarks, “Heaven knew the reason.” The college was on fire; and had it not been for the inspired brevity of the president’s devotions that day, it “had been irrevocably laid in ashes.” One almost shudders now to contemplate the fascinating motive to collegiate incendiarism, which this

¹ As may be imagined, this quotation is originally from his tomb-stone; in spite of which, there is reason to believe that it is, in the main, true.

² Volume II. 16-17.

memorable providence must have suggested thenceforward, for many generations, to the undergraduate mind, —a possible explanation, indeed, of the numerous conflagrations which, since that time, have desolated the Harvard Yard.

Nearly all memorials of John Rogers's work as a writer have perished. One little poem of his, however, remains, a poem addressed to Anne Bradstreet, and, probably, first published in 1678; a monument of the keen enthusiasm which the writings of that admirable woman awakened among the bright young scholars of New England, during the latter part of her own life and for some years afterward; a monument, also, of its author's literary culture, and of his really high faculty of poetic utterance. The framework of this poem is a modified form of the Chaucerian stanza, the variation being very sweet and effective; the order of the rhymes is slightly changed, and the seventh line rolls on into a sonorous Alexandrine. Though, in one place, the poem lapses into a conceit that is gross, and, in fact, damnable, upon the whole it is very noble; it is of high and sustained imaginative expression; it shows, likewise, that this Puritan scholar of our little college in the New England wilderness, had not only conversed to good purpose with the classics of pagan antiquity, but had even dared to overleap the barriers interposed by his own sect between themselves and the more dreadful Christian classics of the Elizabethan singers:

“Madam, twice through the Muses' grove I walked,
Under your blissful bowers, I shrouding there.
It seemed with nymphs of Helicon I talked;
For there those sweet-lipped sisters sporting were;
Apollo with his sacred lute sate by;
On high they made their heavenly sonnets fly;
Posies around they strewed, of sweetest poesy.

Twice have I drunk the nectar of your lines,
Which high sublimed my mean-born fantasy.

Flushed with these streams of your Maronian wines,
 Above myself rapt to an ecstasy,
 Methought I was upon Mount Hybla's top,
 There where I might those fragrant flowers lop,
 Whence did sweet odors flow, and honey-spangles drop.

Nor barking satyr's breath, nor dreary clouds,
 Exhaled from Styx, their dismal drops distil
 Within these fairy, flowery fields; nor shrouds
 The screeching night-raven, with his shady quill;
 But lyric strings here Orpheus nimbly hits,
 Orion on his saddled dolphin sits,
 Chanting as every humor, age, and season fits.

Here silver swans with nightingales set spells,
 Which sweetly charm the traveller, and raise
 Earth's earthed monarchs from their hidden cells,
 And to appearance summon laps'd days.
 There heavenly air becalms the swelling frays,
 And fury fell of elements, allays,
 By paying every one due tribute of his praise.

This seemed the site of all those verdant vales,
 And purl'd springs, whereat the nymphs do play;
 With lofty hills where poets read their tales
 To heavenly vaults, which heavenly sounds repay
 By echo's sweet rebound; here ladies kiss,
 Circling, nor songs nor dance's circle miss;
 But whilst those sirens sung, I sunk in sea of bliss.

Your only hand, those posies did compose;
 Your head, the source whence all those springs did flow;
 Your voice, whence change's sweetest notes arose;
 Your feet, that kept the dance alone, I trow.
 Then veil your bonnets, poetasters all;
 Strike lower amain, and at these humbly fall,
 And deem yourselves advanced to be her pedestal.

Should all with lowly congés laurels bring;
 Waste Flora's magazine, to find a wreath,
 Or Peneus' banks, 'twere too mean offering:
 Your muse a fairer garland doth bequeath

To guard your fairer front : here 'tis your name
 Shall stand immarbled ; this, your little frame,
 Shall great Colossus be, to your eternal fame."¹

III.

The same class of college-boys that produced, in John Rogers, a poet and a Harvard president, produced, likewise, in Urian Oakes, another poet and another Harvard president. The latter, born in 1631, was reared in the woods of Concord—an air, then and since then, quickening to fine and rugged thought. Though of diminutive body, he gave evidence from childhood of a large and gracious intellect ; in college he won high reputation for scholarship ; when but nineteen years old, he published a set of astronomical calculations, prefixed by this motto of modest reference to himself and his brochure :

"Parvum parva decent, sed inest sua gratia parvis."

Upon his graduation, he devoted himself to theology, and began to preach. Soon, however, yielding to the attractions of England under the Protectorate, he went thither, and accepted the living of Titchfield, Hampshire, where he remained until the year of expulsion, 1662. Nevertheless, he continued to find in England both protection and clerical employment ; but in 1671, upon urgent solicitation, he returned to this country, and became pastor of the church at Cambridge. In 1675, he added to his duties as pastor of that church, those of president of Harvard College. In 1681, in the full splendor of his powers and of his usefulness, he died.

A study of the writings of this man, will be likely to convince any one that there is less than the usual mortuary extravagance in the sentence of Increase Mather, that

¹ This noble poem is reprinted in *N. E. Hist. and Geneal. Reg.* V. 138 ; and in *Works of Anne Bradstreet*, J. H. Ellis's ed. 93-96. I have quoted from the latter.

Urian Oakes "was one of the greatest lights that ever shone in this part of the world, or that is ever like to arise in this horizon."¹ He seems to have been what another contemporary² called him, a man of great "art and grace," as well as "a delightful, loving, profitable, fast, and faithful friend." He was distinguished in his day for the unsurpassed elegance and fluency of his Latin; and with respect to his English, it is, perhaps, the richest prose style,—it furnishes the most brilliant examples of originality, breadth, and force of thought, set aglow by flame of passion, by flame of imagination, to be met with in our sermon-literature from the settlement of the country down to the Revolution.³

But the splendid literary capacity of this early American—this product of our pioneer and autochthonous culture—is seen in this: as his sermons are among the noblest specimens of prose to be met with, in that class of writings, during the colonial time, so the one example that is left to us of his verse, reaches the highest point touched by American poetry, during the same era. The poem thus referred to, is an elegy upon the death of a man to whom the poet seems to have been bound by the tenderest friendship, Thomas Shepard, minister of the church in Charlestown, a man of great gifts and of great influence, who died in December, 1677, at the age of forty-two. It was within a few days after the death of this friend, that Oakes published his elegy,—a poem in fifty-two six-lined stanzas; not without some mechanical defects; blurred also by some patches of the prevailing theological jargon; yet, upon the whole, affluent, stately, pathetic; beautiful and strong with the beauty and strength of true imaginative vision:

¹ Mather's Preface to Oakes's Fast Day Sermon, published 1682.

² John Sherman, in Preface to Oakes's Second Artillery-Sermon, published 1682.

³ As a sermon-writer, Urian Oakes is particularly noticed in Chapter XV.

"Reader ! I am no poet ; but I grieve.
Behold here what that passion can do,
That forced a verse, without Apollo's leave,
And whether the learn'd Sisters would or no.
My griefs can hardly speak ; my sobbing muse
In broken terms our sad bereavement rues.

Oh ! that I were a poet now in grain !
How would I invoke the Muses all
To deign their presence, lend their flowing vein,
And help to grace dear Shepard's funeral !
How would I paint our griefs ! and succors borrow
From art and fancy, to limn out our sorrow.

Now could I wish—if wishing would obtain—
The sprightliest efforts of poetic rage,
To vent my griefs, make others feel my pain,
For this loss of the glory of our age.
Here is a subject for the loftiest verse
That ever waited on the bravest hearse.

And could my pen ingeniously distil
The purest spirits of a sparkling wit,
In rare conceits, the quintessence of skill
In elegiac strains—none like to it—
I should think all too little to condole
The fatal loss to us of such a soul.

Could I take highest flights of fancy ; soar
Aloft ; if wit's monopoly were mine ;
All would be too low, too light, too poor,
To pay due tribute to this great divine.
Ah ! wit avails not, when the heart's like to break ;
Great griefs are tongue-tied, when the lesser speak.

Away, loose-reined careers of poetry ;
The celebrated Sisters may be gone ;
We need no mourning women's elegy,
No forced, affected, artificial tone ;
Great and good Shepard's dead ! Ah ! this alone
Will set our eyes abroach, dissolve a stone.

Poetic raptures are of no esteem ;
Daring hyperboles have here no place ;
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Luxuriant wits on such a copious theme
 Would shame themselves, and blush to show their face.
 Here's worth enough to overmatch the skill
 Of the most stately Poet Laureate's quill.

.
 As when some formidable comets blaze,
 As when portentous prodigies appear,
 Poor mortals with amazement stand and gaze,
 With hearts affrighted and with trembling fear ;
 So are we all amazed at this blow,
 Sadly portending some approaching woe.

.
 Art, nature, grace, in him were all combined,
 To show the world a matchless paragon ;
 In whom, of radiant virtues no less shined
 Than a whole constellation ; but he's gone !
 He's gone, alas ! Down in the dust must lie
 As much of this rare person as could die.

If to have solid judgment, pregnant parts,
 A piercing wit, and comprehensive brain ;
 If to have gone the round of all the arts,
 Immunity from death could gain ;
 Shepard would have been death-proof, and secure
 From that all-conquering hand, I'm very sure.

If holy life, and deeds of charity,
 If grace illustrious, and virtue tried,
 If modest carriage, rare humility,
 Could have bribed Death, good Shepard had not died.
 Oh ! but inexorable Death attacks
 The best men, and promiscuous havoc makes.

.
 Farewell, dear Shepard ! Thou art gone before,
 Made free of heaven, where thou shalt sing loud hymns
 Of high, triumphant praises evermore,
 In the sweet choir of saints and seraphims.

.
 My dearest, inmost, bosom-friend is gone !
 Gone is my sweet companion, soul's delight !
 Now in an huddling crowd I'm all alone,
 And almost could bid all the world—Good-night. "

IV.

Thus, we gather some notion of the sort of literary accomplishments that were imparted to the earliest men reared in the American forests; the first growths of the highest culture to be had here in the days of the pioneers. Let us listen, now, to a man who stood for the lower forms of culture in New England in those days, its virile intelligence, its free-mindedness, the breadth of its manhood.

In the spring of 1676, while New England was absorbed in the fright and wrath of its great conflict with the Indians, there came out from the heart of the sea-mists hanging over the island of Nantucket, a clear strong voice, speaking against the one enormous sin of New England, for which, as the speaker thought, Providence was once more smiting the land with peril and pain. Peter Folger, an able and godly man, surveyor, school-master, and lay-assistant to Thomas Mayhew in missionary work among the Indians upon that island, felt it in him, in that hour of stress, to bear some rhymed testimony to a great principle, which then had much need of being uttered both in prose and rhyme—the principle of religious toleration. It seemed to him to be plain enough, that King Philip and his lusty scalp-fumblers were but so many cords braided into that knotted lash with which the Almighty was then scourging dreadfully, even unto the bone, the Christians of New England, for their behavior toward Christian brethren who differed from them in opinion, to wit, Baptists, Quakers, and other lovers and users of free speech. Peter Folger's testimony upon this occasion streamed forth in one long jet of manly, ungrammatical, valiant doggerel,—a ballad, just fit to be sung by "some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style,"—called "A Looking-Glass for the Times; or, The former spirit of New England revived in this generation."¹ He asks what the sin

¹ Printed in 1676; reprinted in 1763; printed again in full in Duyckinck, "Cycl. Am. Lit." Simons's ed. 58-61.

is, for which God is angry against them. This is his answer :

" Sure, 'tis not chiefly for those sins
That magistrates do name,
And make good laws for to suppress
And execute the same.
But 'tis for that same crying sin
That rulers will not own,
And that whereby much cruelty
To brethren hath been shown.
The sin of persecution
Such laws established ;
By which laws they have gone so far
As blood hath touchèd blood."

This ballad, though without one sparkle of poetry, is great in frankness and force ; and as the author of it had seen fit to arraign and censure the mightiest personages in the land—magistrates and ministers—he nobly declined all shirking of responsibility in the affair, but just wove his name and his place of abode into the tissue of his verse, thereby notifying all who might have any issues to try with him, precisely who he was and where he was to be found, in case of need :

" I am for peace, and not for war,
And that's the reason why,
I write more plain than some men do,
That use to daub and lie.
But I shall cease, and set my name
To what I here insert ;
Because, to be a libeller,
I hate it with my heart.
From Sherbon town, where now I dwell,
My name I do put here ;
Without offence, your real friend,
It is Peter Folger."

This strong-brained and free-hearted old surveyor of Nantucket was blessed with sons and daughters nine ; and the youngest of his daughters became the mother of Ben-

jamin Franklin. The grandson, when he undertook to write his autobiography, did not ignore the honorable memory of his ancestor; by a few quiet strokes of description he has secured him against being ever forgotten.

At the very time when Peter Folger, in his sea-girdled solitude, was preaching from the terrible text of the Indian conflict his blunt sermon for toleration, there lived, probably at Charlestown, a school-master named Benjamin Tompson, born at Braintree in 1640, graduated at Harvard in 1662, who was pondering the same text, and who wrought from it a sermon in smoother verse, called "New England's Crisis."¹ This poet's best vein is satiric,—his favorite organ being the rhymed pentameter couplet, with a flow, a vigor, and an edge obviously caught from the contemporaneous verse of John Dryden. He has the partisanship, the exaggeration, the choleric injustice, that are common in satire; and like other satirists, failing to note the moral perspectives of history, he utters over again the stale and easy lie, wherein the past is held up as wiser and holier than the present. Though New England has had a life but little more than fifty years long, the poet sees within it the tokens of a hurrying degeneracy, in customs, in morals, in valor, in piety. He turns back, with reverent and eyeless homage, to the good old times of the Founders, when the people dwelt

"Under thatch'd huts, without the cry of rent,
And the best sauce to every dish—content;"

when

"Deep-skirted doublets, Puritanic capes,
Which now would render men like upright apes,

¹ My most diligent search for this book through public and private libraries, and even by advertisements in the public journals, has failed to bring it to my view. All that is at present known of it, appears to be derived from Samuel Kettell ("Specimens of Am. Poetry," I. Introd. xxxvii.-xlii. and III. 379), who says that he "discovered" it, and then gives an analysis of its contents and two long passages from it. I can hear of no one since then who has seen the book. What became of Kettell's copy?

Was comelier wear, our wiser fathers thought,
Than the cast fashions from all Europe brought ;"

when, at table,

" an honest grace would hold
Till an hot pudding grew at heart a cold ;
And men had better stomachs at religion,
Than I to capon, turkey-cock, or pigeon ;
When honest sisters met to pray, not prate,
About their own, and not their neighbors' state ;"

when Indian impertinence was not tolerated for an instant, and

" No sooner pagan malice peep'd forth,
But valor snibbed it. Then were men of worth,
Who by their prayers slew thousands ; angel-like,
Their weapons are unseen, with which they strike."

Alas, those flawless times—that never were—those

" golden times, too fortunate to hold,
Were quickly sinned away for love of gold ;"

and in retribution, God is sending upon New England the wrath and anguish of the Indian wars :

" Not ink, but blood and tears now serve the turn,
To draw the figure of New England's urn."

Other and slighter poetic work of Benjamin Tompson's is to be met with, safely lodged in the pages of some of his contemporaries. Among the complimentary verses prefixed to the "*Magnalia*,"¹ are two little poems by him, one in Latin, one in English ; and in the text of that work, he has a rhymed eulogy "upon the Very Reverend Samuel Whiting."² Moreover, in William Hubbard's "*Indian Wars*," is a prefatory poem, signed "B. T.," that is undoubtedly Tompson's, and that has some sprightly

¹ Vol. I. 20.

² Ibid. 510-511.

and characteristic lines,—as these, addressed to the historian :

“I took your muse for old Columbus’ ghost,
Who scraped acquaintance with this Western Coast.”¹

V.

In contemporaneous renown, far above all other verse-writers of the colonial time, was Michael Wigglesworth, the explicit and unshrinking rhymers of the Five Points of Calvinism; a poet who so perfectly uttered in verse the religious faith and emotion of Puritan New England that, for more than a hundred years, his writings had universal diffusion there, and a popular influence only inferior to that of the Bible and the Shorter Catechism.

No one holding a different theology from that held by Michael Wigglesworth, can do justice to him as a poet, without exercising the utmost intellectual catholicity; otherwise, disgust and detestation for much of this poet’s message, will drown all sense of the picturesqueness, the imaginative vigor, the tremendous realism, of many of the conceptions under which his message was delivered. It is necessary, likewise, if we would not fail in true insight as we study him, to distinguish between the essence of poetry and its form. There was in him the genius of a true poet; his imagination had an epic strength,—it was courageous, piercing, creative; his pages are strewn with many unwrought ingots of poetry. Yet, he had given up to a narrow and a ferocious creed what was meant for mankind; in his intense pursuit of what he believed to be the good and the true, he forgot the very existence of the beautiful; finally, not having served his poetic apprenticeship under any of the sane and mighty masters of English song, he was himself forever incapable of giving utterance to his genius—except in a dialect that was unworthy of it.

¹ W. Hubbard, “Indian Wars,” I. 24, S. G. Drake’s ed.

His verse is quite lacking in art; its ordinary form being a crude, swinging ballad-measure, with a sort of cheap melody, a shrill, reverberating clatter, that would instantly catch and please the popular ear, at that time deaf to daintier and more subtile effects in poetry. He was, himself, in nearly all respects, the embodiment of what was great, earnest, and sad, in colonial New England; even in his limitations, he was true to it, and was the better qualified to be its poetic voice. In spite, however, of all offences, of all defects, there are in his poetry an irresistible sincerity, a reality, a vividness, reminding one of similar qualities in the prose of John Bunyan; and had these forces in our poet gained for themselves a nobler literary expression, they would have gained for him a high and permanent fame.

Coming to this country in 1638, a child of seven years, he grew up in his father's household at New Haven; in 1651, he was graduated at Harvard College, and served for a time as tutor there; in 1656, he was made pastor of the church at Malden, Massachusetts; and there he remained, as pastor and physician, until his death in 1705. In body he was slight and delicate—"a feeble, little shadow of a man;"¹ all his life he had sorrow and pain; yet there was in him an intensity of spirit that triumphed over all physical ills, and a tenderness of sympathy that made him, after the somewhat dreary manner of those days, "a man of the beatitudes,"² and a comforter to all who, like himself, knew the touch of grief.

As a poet, Michael Wigglesworth stands for New England Puritanism confronting with steady gaze the sublime and hideous dogmas of its creed, and trying to use those dogmas for the admonition and the consolation of mankind by putting them into song. A sensitive, firm, wide-ranging, unresting spirit, he looks out mournfully over the

¹ Cotton Mather, in *Funeral Sermon*, 26.

² The Rev. A. P. Peabody's description of him, cited in J. W. Dean, "Sketch of the Life of Michael Wigglesworth," 10.

throngs of men that fill the world,—all of them totally depraved, all of them caught, from farthest eternity, in the adamantine meshes of God's decrees; the most of them, also, being doomed in advance, by those decrees, to an endless existence of ineffable torment,—and upon this situation of affairs, the excellent Michael Wigglesworth proposes to make poetry. Such as it is, it is absolutely sincere, grim, pathetic, horrible. He chants, with utter frankness, the chant of Christian fatalism, the moan of earthly vanity and sorrow, the physical bliss of the saved, the physical tortures of the damned.

In the multitude of his verses, Michael Wigglesworth surpasses all other poets of the colonial time, excepting Anne Bradstreet. Besides numerous minor poems, he is the author of three poetical works of considerable length.

One of these, "God's Controversy with New England," was "written in the time of the great drought," 1662,—a calamity of which the author takes advantage for the purpose, as he tells the reader, of

"pointing at those faults of thine
Which are notorious."¹

The argument of the poem is this: "New England planted, prospered, declining, threatened, punished." The poet holds the opinion, common enough in his day, that before the arrival of the English in America, this continent had been the choice and peculiar residence of the Devil and his angels:

"A waste and howling wilderness,
Where none inhabited,
But hellish fiends, and brutish men,
That devils worshippèd.

This region was in darkness placed,
Far off from heaven's light,
Amidst the shadows of grim death
And of eternal night."

¹ This poem was first printed in *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.* for 1871-1873, 83-93; from which I make my quotations.

At last, in this doleful realm, arrive the Lord's forces from England :

" The dark and dismal western woods,
The Devil's den whilere,
Beheld such glorious gospel-shine,
As none beheld more clear."

The poet then pictures the entrance of the English into America, in language similar to that used in Scripture to describe the entrance of the Jews into Canaan; he chronicles the zeal of the first generation, next its decay; after which, as he informs us,

" The air became tempestuous ;
The wilderness gan quake ;
And from above, with awful voice,
The Almighty, thundering, spake."

What the Almighty then spake, is faithfully reported by the poet,—a quaintly eloquent and very Puritanic address to the people of New England, closing with a dire menace of immediate retribution :

" Thus ceased his dreadful, threatening voice,
The high and lofty One.
The heavens stood still, appalled thereat ;
The earth beneath did groan.

Soon after I beheld and saw
A mortal dart come flying ;
I looked again, and quickly saw
Some fainting, others dying ;"

and the poet goes on to give, with the exactness of a medical man in full practice, a catalogue of the various diseases then most prevalent in his neighborhood; he also draws a picture of the barrenness of the fields in consequence of the long drought; and he concludes with a pathetic appeal to the "many praying saints" still left in New England.

Another large poem of Wigglesworth's is "Meat out of the Eater; or, Meditations concerning the necessity, end, and usefulness of afflictions unto God's children, all tending to prepare them for and comfort them under the Cross." Here we have simply the Christian doctrine of comfort in sorrow, translated into metrical jingles. With nearly all sensitiveness to literary form torpid in New England, and with devout feeling warm and alert, it is not strange that this clumsy but sympathetic poem should have found there a multitude of admirers. It was first published, probably, in 1669; ten years afterward, it had passed through at least four editions; and during the entire colonial age, it was a much-read manual of solace in affliction. And, indeed, it is such poetry as might still serve that purpose, at least by plucking from the memory, for a moment, a rooted sorrow, and substituting a literary anguish in place of it.

But the master-piece of Michael Wigglesworth's genius, and his most delectable gift to an admiring public, was that blazing and sulphurous poem, "The Day of Doom; or, A poetical description of the great and last Judgment." In summoning to himself the inspiration necessary for the composition of the work, the poet flouts at all pagan help, and utters "a prayer unto Christ the Judge of the world":

"Thee, thee alone, I'll invoke;
For I do much abominate
To call the Muses to mine aid.

.

Oh! what a deal of blasphemy,
And heathenish impiety,
In Christian poets may be found,
Where heathen gods with praise are crowned!
They make Jehovah to stand by,
Till Juno, Venus, Mercury,
With frowning Mars, and thund'ring Jove,
Rule earth below, and heaven above.

But I have learned to pray to none,
 Save unto God in Christ alone ;
 Nor will I laud, no, not in jest,
 That which I know God doth detest.
 I reckon it a damning evil,
 To give God's praises to the Devil. .
 Thou, Christ, art he to whom I pray ;
 Thy glory fain I would display.
 Oh ! guide me by thy sacred Sprite,
 So to indite, and so to write,
 That I thine holy name may praise,
 And teach the sons of men thy ways."

The opening stanzas of the poem give a rather brisk picture of the heedlessness and sensual ease of the world, just before the Judgment :

" Still was the night, serene and bright,
 When all men sleeping lay ;
 Calm was the season, and carnal reason
 Thought so 'twould last for aye."

Upon this scene of carnal security, suddenly bursts the world's doom :

" For at midnight breaks forth a light,
 Which turns the night to day,
 And speedily an hideous cry
 Doth all the world dismay."

At this dreadful noise, all sleeping sinners are abruptly wakened :

" They rush from beds with giddy heads,
 And to their windows run,
 Viewing this light, which shines more bright
 Than doth the noonday sun."

At once, in appalling state, appears Christ, the Judge :

" Before his face the heavens give place,
 And skies are rent asunder,
 With mighty voice and hideous noise,
 More terrible than thunder.

No heart so bold but now grows cold
 And almost dead with fear ;
 No eye so dry but now can cry,
 And pour out many a tear.
 Earth's potentates and powerful states,
 Captains and men of might,
 Are quite abashed, their courage dashed,
 At this most dreadful sight.

.
 All kindreds wail, all hearts do fail ;
 Horror the world doth fill
 With weeping eyes and loud outcries,—
 Yet knows not how to kill.

Some hide themselves in caves and delves,
 In places under ground ;
 Some rashly leap into the deep
 To scape by being drowned ;
 Some to the rocks—O senseless blocks !—
 And woody mountains run,
 That there they might this fearful sight
 And dreaded Presence shun.

.
 The mountains smoke, the hills are shook,
 The earth is rent and torn,
 As if she should be clear dissolved,
 Or from her centre borne.
 The sea doth roar, forsakes the shore,
 And shrinks away for fear ;
 The wild beasts flee into the sea,
 So soon as he draws near."

After this, the trump is sounded ; at which, the dead
 rise from their graves, the living are " changed," and all
 are brought before the vast tribunal :

" His wingèd hosts fly through all coasts,
 Together gathering
 Both good and bad, both quick and dead,
 And all to judgment bring.
 Out of their holes, those creeping moles
 That hid themselves for fear,
 By force they take, and quickly make
 Before the judge appear."

Immediately, the sheep are parted from the goats; the former are briefly described; then the latter, as follows:

" At Christ's left hand, the goats do stand :

All whining hypocrites,
Who for self-ends did seem Christ's friends,
But fostered guileful sprites ;

.

Apostates base, and run-aways,
Such as have Christ forsaken,
Of whom the Devil, with seven more evil,
Hath fresh possession taken ;

.

Blasphemers lewd, and swearers shrewd,
Scoffers at purity,
That hated God, contemned his rod,
And loved security ;
Sabbath-polluters, saints-persecutors,
Presumptuous men, and proud,
Who never loved those that reproved ;
All stand among this crowd.

.

False-witness bearers, and self-forswearers,
Murderers, and men of blood,
Witches, enchanters, and ale-house haunters,
Beyond account there stood.

.

There stand all nations and generations
Of Adam's progeny,
Whom Christ redeemed not, whom he esteemed not,
Through infidelity.

.

These numerous bands, wringing their hands,
And weeping all stand there,
Fill'd with anguish, whose hearts do languish,
Through self-tormenting fear.
Fast by them stand, at Christ's left hand,
The lion fierce and fell,
The dragon bold, that serpent old,
That hurried souls to hell.

There also stand, under command,
Legions of sprites unclean,
And hellish fiends, that are no friends
To God, nor unto men.

With dismal chains, and strongest reins,
Like prisoners of hell,
They're held in place before Christ's face,
Till he their doom shall tell.
These void of tears, but filled with fears,
And dreadful expectation
Of endless pains and scalding flames,
Stand waiting for damnation."

Then proceeds the business of the court. The saints are first attended to: they draw near, and receive their benign award, and are at once comfortably placed on thrones to join with Christ in judging the wicked. Then, of course, the wicked have their turn; and in reply to the indictment against them all, different classes of them put in their defences, and "the judge uncaseth them." Thus, in order, are considered "hypocrites," "civil honest men," "those that pretend want of opportunity to repent," those who "plead examples of their betters," "heathen men," and others, until, at last, "reprobate infants" are reached:

"Then to the bar, all they drew near
Who died in infancy,
And never had, or good or bad,
Effected personally,
But from the womb unto the tomb
Were straightway carried,
Or, at the least, ere they transgressed,—
Who thus began to plead."

These poor little babes, breaking from the muteness of their terror over all these horrid proceedings; argue, with a truly precocious logical acumen, against the injustice of their being cast into hell forever and ever, on account of a sin committed by Adam,—particularly as Adam himself was even then seated in quiet bliss in one of the most

agreeable and conspicuous of those thrones among the saints. With these infantile pleadings, however, the poet is in no respect embarrassed ; and in his poem he has " their arguments taken off " with great promptness and severity—a severity mitigated, indeed, by one indulgent concession. The judge says to these infants, in conclusion :

" You sinners are ; and such a share
 As sinners, may expect ;
 Such you shall have, for I do save
 None but mine own elect.
 Yet to compare your sin with their
 Who lived a longer time,
 I do confess yours is much less,
 Though every sin's a crime.

A crime it is ; therefore in bliss
 You may not hope to dwell ;
 But unto you I shall allow
 The easiest room in hell."

Thus the last word of argument is spoken ; Christ begins

" To fire the earth's foundation ; "

and to this enormous conflagration are the shrieking victims of God's omnipotent fury then formally doomed :

" Ye sinful wights and cursèd sprites,
 That work iniquity,
 Depart together, from me forever,
 To endless misery ;
 Your portion take in yonder lake
 Where fire and brimstone flameth ;
 Suffer the smart which your desert
 As its due wages claimeth.

.
 Then might you hear them rend and tear
 The air with their outcries ;
 The hideous noise of their sad voice
 Ascendeth to the skies.
 They wring their hands, their caitiff-hands,
 And gnash their teeth for terror ;
 They cry, they roar, for anguish sore,
 And gnaw their tongues for horror.

But get away without delay ;
 Christ pities not your cry ;
 Depart to hell, there may you yell
 And roar eternally.

.
 As chaff that's dry, as dust doth fly
 Before the northern wind,
 Right so are they chasèd away
 And can no refuge find.
 They hasten to the pit of woe
 Guarded by angels stout,
 Who to fulfil Christ's holy will
 Attend this wicked rout ;

Whom having brought, as they are taught,
 Unto the brink of hell ;
 (That dismal place, far from Christ's face,
 Where Death and Darkness dwell,
 Where God's fierce ire kindleth the fire
 And vengeance feeds the flame,
 With piles of wood and brimstone flood,
 So none can quench the same ;)

With iron bands they bind their hands
 And cursèd feet together ;
 And cast them all, both great and small,
 Into that lake forever ;
 Where day and night, without respite,
 They wail and cry and howl,
 For torturing pain which they sustain,
 In body and in soul.

For day and night, in their despite,
 Their torment's smoke ascendeth ;
 Their pain and grief have no relief,
 Their anguish never endeth.
 There must they lie and never die,
 Though dying every day ;
 There must they, dying, ever lie,
 And not consume away.

Die fain they would, if die they could,
 But death will not be had ;
 God's direful wrath their bodies hath
 Forever immortal made.

They live to lie in misery
And bear eternal woe ;
And live they must whilst God is just,
That he may plague them so."

The last strains of the poem are singularly appropriate ; they celebrate the felicity of the saints, "who rejoice to see judgment executed upon the wicked world."

This great poem, which, with entire unconsciousness, attributes to the Divine Being a character the most execrable and loathsome to be met with, perhaps, in any literature, Christian or pagan, had for a hundred years a popularity far exceeding that of any other work, in prose or verse, produced in America before the Revolution. The eighteen hundred copies of the first edition were sold within a single year ; which implies the purchase of a copy of "The Day of Doom" by at least every thirty-fifth person then in New England,—an example of the commercial success of a book never afterward equalled in this country. Since that time, the book has been repeatedly published ; at least once in England, and at least eight times in America—the last time being in 1867.¹

Happily, this frightful and blasphemous delineation of the government exercised over us by the Good God, has at last, in civilized society, lost its cruel power over the human mind, and may now be read merely as a curious literary phenomenon,—as a dreadful example, indeed, of the distressing illusions once inflicted upon themselves, in the name of religion, by the best of men. But no narrative of our intellectual history during the colonial days, can justly fail to record the enormous influence of this terrible poem during all those times. Not only was it largely circulated in the form of a book, but it was hawked about the country, in broadsides, as a popular ballad ; it "was the solace," as Lowell playfully says, "of every fire-side, the flicker of the pine-knots by which it was conned

¹ This is the ed. from which I have drawn the foregoing extracts.

perhaps adding a livelier relish to its premonitions of eternal combustion ;"¹ its pages were assigned in course to little children, to be learned by heart, along with the catechism ; as late as the present century, there were in New England many aged persons who were able to repeat the whole poem ; for more than a hundred years after its first publication, it was, beyond question, the one supreme poem of Puritan New England ; and Cotton Mather predicted that it would continue to be read in New England until the day of doom itself should arrive.

Among the sons of Michael Wigglesworth, was one, Samuel, who in early life gave brilliant proof of having high poetic genius. In 1707, when he was eighteen years of age, he was graduated at Harvard ; then, for two years, he remained near the college, pursuing further studies ; then, after an experience of fluctuation between the claims of medicine, pedagogy, and divinity, he gave himself to the latter profession, and in its pursuit passed the remainder of his long life, dying in 1768. It was in 1709, while he was but a youth of twenty and near the end of his post-graduate studies at college, that he wrote a few verses which, alone, are sufficient to show him to have had a true and fine endowment for poetry. These verses are entitled "A Funeral Song." They were written in commemoration of a gifted young man, Nathaniel Clarke, who, after taking the Master's degree at Harvard, had paid a visit to England, but, on the voyage homeward, had died, and been buried in the sea. Here, indeed, in this song of friendship and of sorrow, we trace once more the touch of a real poet. Even to his eyes, glad with the gladness of his youth, the once radiant world, now that his friend

¹ "Harvard Book," II. 158. The humor of Lowell's remark should not give us the impression that "The Day of Doom" was often perused with any humorous feeling, by the first three or four generations of readers,—to whom, indeed, all its fearful words seemed only the literal truth. Joseph T. Buckingham mentions that even after the Revolution he read it, as a lad, with great excitement and fright. His "Personal Memoirs," I. 19.

has gone from it, wears a sorrowful and impoverished look; he grieves, too, because into the mysteries and silences of death his friend has been hurried, at a time when no pressure of the hand, no whisper of affection, could tell him of the love and the grief of those who were left behind. Therefore, the poet, unable to endure the anguish of this thought, would pursue his friend, even into the far heavens whither he is gone; would make outcry and inquest for him through the remotest spaces of the universe; and convey to him, where-soever he may be, the passionate message that had been unspoken here :

“ Vain poet's license ! now, if thou canst soar
Above mount Sinai's top, 'bove things revealed,
Put on the winged morn, and speed amain
Where increate eternity's revealed ;

Fancy thyself shot through the ethereal world,
Translated from thy clay, amidst the seats
Of highest angels, mighty seraphim,
Of thrones, dominions, princes, potentates ;

Find there a saint in milk-white robes arrayed,
Clothed with the sun, adorned with grace and love,
Who not long since bade this vile world adieu,
To fill the number of the choir above.

Tell him who now is glorified above,
How rivulets of tears have drowned our eyes ;
Our hopes are all thrown overboard with him,
Our tumid thoughts becalmed in a surprise.

Put on thy graces, court the vestal soul
To a relapse of things ; with all thy might
Sing an encomium of terrestrial joys,
Try if thou canst recall her winged flight.

At least ascend and view the orbs above,
See where he pierced heaven's powdered canopy ;
Perhaps his soul left her idea there,
Or stopped to hear the spheric harmony.

Behold the starry train—those rolling lamps
That burn fierce anthems to the eternal light ;
Number those morning sons, and find him there ;
Look, look, and see him, with extreme delight,

Warbling divinest airs, and shouting forth
Loud hallelujahs to the Immortal King,—
The God whose breath first formed the heavenly hosts,
And quickening gave to every living thing.

Descend, my soul, to the Elysian bowers,
The imaginary shades, where up and down
The blessed ghosts do rove and pass the hours,
In grateful pastimes till the eternal dawn.

Trace every verdant grove, each flowery bank,
Whose wanton edges curl the silver streams ;
Search every silent grot, each peaceful vale,
Each circling walk in those enameled greens.

Ask all the rural powers and infant swains
That range in those luxurious paths of bliss,
Ask if or no a comely, gentle youth
Has flown of late into their paradise."

But, suddenly, in the midst of this brave scheme of communication with the dead, there falls upon the poet the thought of its impossibility. Death outwits us! Death despoils us and there is no remedy! Death, "an angry foe," "a lawless, tearless enemy,"

"Murders us with an unrelenting hand,
And reaps impartial both the green and dry.

He shrinks not at the manly grace :
See, here he rudely takes their breath :
See, see, the valiant soul gives place
Unto all-conquering Time and Death."

Then, the fierceness of this invective having spent itself, the poem ends with one short strain of altered melody, exquisite in beauty and pathos:

"Add one kind drop unto his watery tomb :
Weep, ye relenting eyes and ears ;
See, Death himself could not refrain—
But buried him in tears."¹

The genius that produced this dainty music, and that might have achieved a high career in poetry, soon became wrapped in the occupations of a country-pastor, and was content to utter itself, during the subsequent fifty-nine years of its earth-life, in the commonplaces of theologic talk.

VI.

We are now well entered upon the eighteenth century, and are next to stand before a most notable poetic personage, Nicholas Noyes of Salem. His distinction in our literature will be that he was the last and the greatest of our poetical punsters and image-manglers, reproducing in America, even during the earlier years of the eighteenth century, the most grotesque traits of a form of poetry that had died out in England, near the middle of the century before.

Whatever we may have to conclude respecting the poetry of Nicholas Noyes, we shall agree that his personal qualities were fine and strong. He was born in Massachusetts in 1647; was graduated at Harvard in 1667, at the tail of his class in social rank, at the head of it in scholarship; he was minister of Haddam from 1670 until 1683; in the latter year, he was made colleague of the venerable John Higginson at Salem; and at Salem he passed the remainder of his life, which came to its close in 1717. This celebrated town was described by a physician, thirty years after Nicholas Noyes lived in it, as one in which "hypochondriac, hysteric, and other maniac disorders prevail," indeed, "seem to be endemic."²

¹ The entire poem is in *N. E. Hist. and Geneal. Reg.* IV. 89-90, and is dated Charlestown, Aug. 15, 1709.

² W. Douglass, "Summary," I. 448.

There, in an especial manner, appeared the frenzy of witchcraft, and the still wilder frenzy of persecuting it; and in this latter madness the brain of poor Nicholas Noyes was sadly entangled for a time. It does one good to mention that, when at last his lunacy passed off and he saw the folly and the cruelty of his conduct, he spoke out like a man and confessed it—naught extenuating, and went about among the people, humbly making all possible reparation to the persons whom he had wronged. This was, perhaps, the only cloud that ever darkened his long, benignant, studious life,—a life that seemed to lie outspread in a lovelier and still brighter light, when its solitary shadow was withdrawn. To his contemporaries, he appeared to be a reader of all literatures, to bring into his most common talk great entertainment and utility, and to be faithful and even illustrious in his sacred office; a true friend and helper of his kind.

Doubtless he had little expectation of being remembered in our literary history; for in his coyness, though he wrote much, he shrank from the publicity of print. In prose, only two productions of his have been found,—a pleasant biographical sketch contributed by him to the "*Magnalia*,"¹ and an election sermon for the year 1698.² It is his verse that is phenomenal in our literary annals; for, even in his old age, he continued to write the sort of poetry that, in his youth, had been the fashion, both in England and in America,—the degenerate euphuism of Donne, of Wither, of Quarles, of George Herbert. To this appalling type of poetry, Nicholas Noyes faithfully adhered, even to the end of his days, unseduced by the rhythmical heresies, the classic innovations, of John Dryden and Alexander Pope.

When Cotton Mather launched his "*Magnalia*," Nicholas Noyes was one of the admiring friends who stood

¹ Vol. I. 483-488.

² Entitled "New England's Duty and Interest to be an Habitation of Justice and a Mountain of Holiness."

about and huzzaed, as the huge and dreadful hulk glided down the well-greased stocks into the sea. He produced, in fact, "a prefatory poem on that excellent book," particularly addressed "to the candid reader." The first half of the poem is an argument for the enormous value

"of such a scribe as Cotton Mather,
Whose piety, whose pains, and peerless pen,
Revives New England's nigh-lost origin ; "

and the argument is based upon the indisputable fact that the American aborigines, whatever else they may have had, had no such scribe as Cotton Mather, and that, in consequence, their history had perished. Concerning all these miserable and Matherless nations we ask, and we ask in vain,

"Who was their father, Japhet, Shem, or Cham;
And how they straddled to the antipodes
To look another world beyond the seas;
And when, and why, and where they last broke ground,
What risks they ran, where they first anchoring found?
.
.
.
What charters had they ; what immunities ;
What altars, temples, cities, colonies,
Did they erect ; who were their public spirits ? "

But since, in Cotton Mather, the white inhabitants of America had at last found a worthy historian, such oblivion can never fall upon them :

"Heads of our tribes, whose corps are under ground,
Their names and fames in chronicles renowned,
Begrammed on golden ouches he hath set,
Past envy's teeth and time's corroding fret." ¹

Perhaps there were then in New England other persons that could equal Nicholas Noyes in the writing of "prefatory poems ;" but, throughout all the colonial times, he had no rival there as an epitaph-maker, and as a fabricator of punning elegies. In this realm of service, he seems to have possessed a skill that not art alone, that only genius

¹ "Magnalia," I. 19.

with art, could have given him, at perfectly emptying his verses of the last atom of beauty, and at so packing them with quirks, quibbles, conceits, and the most unexpected contortions of unlovely imagery, as to impart to them a sort of horrible fascination—a mirthfulness in the presence of which the reader writhes in pain and disgust.

When, in 1708, his aged associate, the noble John Higginson, died, Nicholas Noyes lovingly described him as one who

“For rich array cared not a fig,
And wore Elisha's periwig;
At ninety-three had comely face
Adorned with majesty and grace;
Before he went among the dead,
He children's children's children had.”

In 1715, there died in Salem a much younger man than Higginson, the Reverend Joseph Green; and as his name presented a boundless opening for an elegiac punster, his brother Noyes poured out over his memory nine pages of most whimsical and distracting verses:

“In God's house we of late did see
A Green and growing olive tree.
'Twas planted by a living spring
That always made it flourishing,
Filled it with sap and oily juice
That leaves and fruit and light produce;
An holy tree, whose very wood
For temple-use was choice and good.”

Thus the poet goes forward, pitilessly ringing changes on the verdant name of the dead gentleman; speaking of “Green olive leaves,” of “pastures Green;” saying that

“Summer and Winter, Green was he,
Most like the noble olive tree;”

and at last taking leave of him with this relenting couplet:

“His Master's work he did so ply,
He did but just get time to die.”¹

¹ This elegy is in the library of the Mass. Hist. Soc.

The supreme poetic opportunity in the career of Nicholas Noyes occurred, however, some years earlier, when a Reverend friend of his, James Brayley of Roxbury, became afflicted with the Stone. To this unhappy man the poet, accordingly, sent some verses, both consolatory and congratulatory, which certainly ought to establish the fame of Nicholas Noyes as the most gifted and brilliant master ever produced in America, of the most execrable form of poetry to which the English language was ever degraded. In this poem, the author flatteringly expresses astonishment, not only at the fortitude of his friend, but at his versatility, both in doing and in suffering:

“What! in one breath both live and die,
Groan, laugh, sigh, smile, cry, versify?
Is this the Stone? Are these the pains
Of that disease that plagues the reins?
That slyly steals into the bladder,
Then bites and stings like to the adder?
Is this the scourge of studious men,
That leaves unwhipt scarce five of ten?”

He then advances into the merits of his theme, using the name of his friend's disease as a pivot on which to revolve the antic and frantic creations of his fancy:

“For if thou shouldst be Stoned to death,
And this way pelted out of breath,
Thou wilt like Stephen fall asleep,
And free from pain forever keep.”

The poet then proceeds to spiritual exhortation:

“That Stone which builders did refuse,
For thy foundation choose and use.
Yea, think what Christ for thee hath done,
Who took an harder, heavier, Stone
Out of thine heart;”

and he asks him to remember this comforting truth, that, great as may be the sufferings inflicted on him by the

Stone in this world, they are vastly less than the sufferings of the damned in the next, some of whom

“roll the Sisyphæan Stone.”

With this joyous reflection, he also invites him to anticipate the bliss of heaven, where

“shall hid manna be thy fare,
In which no grit nor gravel are ;
Yea, Christ will give thee a White Stone
With a New Name engraved thereon.”¹

VII.

For a considerable time before Nicholas Noyes had ceased from his detestable labors, the new school of poetry in England, represented first by Dryden and then by Pope, had found sympathetic pupils in America. With the advancing years of the first half of the eighteenth century, the authority of this school became complete among us. The unloveliness of the earlier manner of poetry disappeared; and, in place of it, we find the smooth and mechanic melody, the shallow elegance, the monotonous grace, that, to a large extent, served as substitutes for real thought and passion. During the earlier portion of the century, an English scholar, Francis Knapp, a graduate of St. John's college, Oxford, lived the life of a literary recluse, at Watertown, Massachusetts; and glorying in a personal acquaintance with Alexander Pope, he attempted to reproduce, on “the bleak Atlantic shore,” and amid “solitudes obscene,” the poetic notes of his master.² The two eloquent preachers, Benjamin Colman and Mather Byles, both caught the new tune in English verse; and for

¹ This monstrous production was printed in “The Boston News-Letter,” August 4-11, 1707, from which I copy these extracts.

² Poem by Francis Knapp, among the “Recommendatory Poems,” prefixed to Pope's works. See, also, “Biographical Sketches,” by Samuel L. Knapp, 140-143; and Duyckinck's “Cycl. of Am. Lit.” 77-78, Simons's ed.

nearly fifty years, with a fatal facility, to the vast admiration of their parishioners, they both continued to evolve twaddling variations upon it. The gifted daughter of Benjamin Colman, Jane Turell, was instructed by her father to regard Sir Richard Blackmore as a poet "far above all her praises," and, next "after the Reverend Doctor Watts," as "the laureate of the Church of Christ;"¹ and to this knightly and medicinal bard she addressed verses—not unworthy of his own pen.²

In Roger Wolcott, we have still another early example of the American knack of doing a great many things, and of doing them tolerably well,—a knack that does not become intolerable, except when it thrusts itself, as it has a dangerous fondness for doing, into the sphere of poetry. Born in Windsor, Connecticut, in 1679, in a wild frontier settlement, he had never school or school-master for a day; at the age of twelve, he was bound as an apprentice to a trade; at the age of twenty-one, he set up for himself in business in his native town; he was diligent, thrifty, studious; he turned his attention to public affairs, military and political, and became great in both; in a campaign for the conquest of Canada, in 1711, he was commissary of the Connecticut troops; at the capture of Louisburg in 1745, he was major-general; he also rose through many stages of civil promotion, becoming member of the colonial assembly and of the colonial council, county-judge, deputy-governor, chief-justice of the superior court; at last, in 1751, he became governor, and continued so for four years; he died in 1767, a wise, strong, apt, devout, and wholesome man. He began life in ignorance and poverty; he ended it, at nearly ninety years of age, crowned with earthly prosperity, full of honor and knowledge, a Nestor, a patriot, a sage.

His one human frailty lurked in an invincible illusion that he was a poet; and, surely, the man who could storm

¹ "Memoirs of Mrs. Jane Turell," by E. Turell, 29-30. ² *Ibid.* 28-29.

and carry so many heights of difficulty—might he not hope to carry by storm the heights of Parnassus also? Other poets had found inspiration in patriotic memories; he also. Accordingly, in commemoration of the early valor and statesmanship of his own Connecticut, he wrote a long poem, with a title almost as prosaic, if possible, as the poem to which it belongs: "A Brief Account of the Agency of the Honorable John Winthrop, Esquire, in the Court of King Charles the Second, A.D., 1662, when he obtained a Charter for the Colony of Connecticut."

This great historical poem, the author forbore to publish in his lifetime;¹ but upon one occasion, even during his lifetime, he did venture into print with specimens of his verse, to wit, "Poetical Meditations, being the Improvement of some vacant Hours," published at New London in 1725. Probably the best passage in the book is this, entitled "The Heart is Deep":

"He that can trace a ship making her way
Amidst the threatening surges of the sea ;
Or track a towering eagle in the air ;
Or on a rock find the impressions there
Made by a serpent's footsteps ; who surveys
The subtle intrigues that a young man lays
In his sly courtship of a harmless maid,
Whereby his wanton amours are conveyed
Into her breast ; 'tis he alone that can
Find out the curs'd policies of man."²

The ordinary stroke and height of its art may be seen in these lines, on Man :

"For having once rebelled against his duty,
Opacous sin soon blasted all his beauty ;"³

or in these lines, on Pride :

¹ The honor of first publishing it fell to the Mass. Hist. Soc. See their Collections, first series, IV. 262-298.

² "Poetical Meditations," 12.

³ Ibid. 5.

"Pride goes before destruction,
And haughtiness before a fall ;
Whoever pores his merits on,
Shall be endangered there withal." ¹

Upon the whole, the "Poetical Meditations" of Roger Wolcott are sad rubbish. He himself described them as "the improvement of some vacant hours." One finds it hard to imagine by what possibility such things could have been an improvement upon any sort of vacancy likely to occur in this good man's hours. For ourselves, we could have been content, had his hours remained vacant ; and putting our own interpretation on his words, we thoroughly agree with the author himself when, in one place, he drops the judicious observation,

"These very Meditations are
Quite insupportable to bear." ²

VIII.

Among writers of poetry intended to be humorous, we encounter, in this period, at least two that may require a moment's notice. One of these is John Seccomb, the author of "Father Abbey's Will," and of "The Letter to the Widow Abbey,"—a writer, who, by some untoward accident, has had an extraordinary notoriety in our early literary history. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1728, at the age of twenty ; was pastor of a church in the town of Harvard from 1733 to 1757 ; then, vexed by a calumny born, it is said,³ of the jealous imagination of his wife, he withdrew from that parish and from the colony likewise, and betook himself as far as possible from the rumor of the scandal that had besmirched him, settling in Chester, Nova Scotia ; where he served as minister, apparently in clean repute, during the remainder of his long life, dying in 1793. Had there been in him any germ of

¹ "Poetical Meditations," 7.

² *Ibid.* 16.

³ J. L. Sibley, in his ed. of "Father Abbey's Will," 8-9.

literary force, the extreme popularity, both in England and in America, achieved by his two effusions of metrical balderdash, would have prompted him to rise to something better, even in the vein of humorous verse. He lived more than sixty years after the perpetration of the ballads referred to; but he appears never again to have issued into print, excepting twice, each time for the publication of a sermon, the first at an ordination, the second at a funeral, neither discourse being of any notable merit. It was in 1730, while he was still at Cambridge awaiting his second degree, that a queer old personage named Matthew Abdy, for many years sweeper, bed-maker, and bottle-washer to the college, came to his death; and John Seccomb conceived the harmless idea of celebrating the event by writing a pretended will, wherein the old fellow is made to bequeath to his widow all his real and personal estate, the several paltry items of which are reeled off in some fourteen stanzas of doggerel, the flatness and vulgarity of which may be sufficiently ascertained by a single one of them :

" A greasy hat,
My old ram cat,
A yard and half of linen,
A woolen fleece,
A pot of grease,
In order for your spinning."

This miserable stuff, well enough for an obscure escape of rustic satire or of under-graduate wit, happened to catch the attention of the governor of Massachusetts, who, deeming it something wonderful, sent it to England. Strangely enough, it was at once published there, both in "The Gentleman's Magazine" and in "The London Magazine;" and it seems to have been widely read in the mother-country, as a just specimen of the poetic attainments and of the general literary taste of the Americans. It is hardly to be wondered at, that, instructed by such tokens, the English people should have formed very chast-

ened expectations of the poetic destinies of their American children; or, that, nearly a hundred years afterward, one famous English poet should have written to another one, with reference to an American then in England, "I suppose an American enquires for live poets as you or I should do in America for a skunk or an opossum."¹ The uncommon notice paid in England to Seccomb's lines, naturally increased their celebrity in America: they were circulated here in newspapers and in broadsides; several imitations of them were produced; and New England mothers, we are told, were wont to recite them for the diversion of their children,—a service, indeed, in which they may have been not ineffective, since they rise, perhaps, to the intellectual altitude of the nursery. The author's true place as a melodist seems to be among the tuneful posterity of Mother Goose.

A humorist of far more palpable merit was Joseph Green, who was born in Boston in 1706; was graduated at Harvard when twenty years old; became a successful merchant in his native city; took some interest in colonial politics; upon the rupture with England became a loyalist, went into exile, and passed the last years of his life in England, dying there in 1780. In his time, he had great reputation for wit, particularly in the form of satirical verse. His favorite view of things was the facetious one; he was convivial and hilarious; he loved to mitigate by his waggeries the sombre tints of life at the Puritan metropolis; and neither religion nor death, it was believed, could awe him into gravity, as is partly intimated in this epitaph, which one of his friends wrote for his tomb-stone, long before he had need of one:

" Siste, Viator ! Here lies one,
Whose life was whim, whose soul was pun ;

¹ Robert Southey to Walter Scott, in *Life of Southey* by his Son, Harper's ed. 364.

And if you go too near his hearse,
He'll joke you, both in prose and verse."

It may be that, upon inspection of such examples of his wit as have floated down to us, we shall find that they scarcely justify the ecstasies of laughter with which, when first delivered, they seem to have been greeted; but, besides the fact that the pungency of personal satire always evaporates with time and distance, we need to reflect that Joseph Green's fellow citizens were not exactly persons abandoned to mirthful ways, and that they are, upon the whole, to be pardoned if they did welcome, at its full value, any honest effort for their diversion. Of his merit, no small part lay in his facility; and long after he was gone, the people of Boston kept alive there the memory of his exploits of extemporized witticism in verse. Thus, one day, while passing along the street, he observed that the Fourth Latin School of Boston was being taken down, in order to make room for the enlargement of an adjoining church; upon which incident, Green instantly composed this epigram:

" ' A fig for your learning ! I tell you the town,
To make the church larger, must pull the school down.'
' Unluckily spoken,' replied Master Birch;
' Then learning, I fear, stops the growth of the church.' " ¹

On another occasion, a club of good fellows in Boston, of whom Green was prince, went to call upon one of their own number, named John Checkley, who was just then recovering from a long and dangerous illness. This gentleman, it appears, was noted for the ugliness of his countenance, at that time rendered still more forbidding by the ravages of disease. During the visit, it was agreed that as a mark of their satisfaction over Checkley's recovery, his portrait should be painted by Smibert; and Green was appointed to write a few appropriate verses to be inscribed

¹ Given in S. Kettell, "Specimens of Am. Poetry," I. 139.

beneath the portrait. Without waiting for the artist to do his work, the wit immediately drew forth his notebook, and, inspired by the countenance of poor Checkley, at once performed his part of the task, to the general satisfaction :

" John, had thy sickness snatched thee from our sight
And sent thee to the realms of endless night,
Posterity would then have never known
Thine eye, thy beard, thy cowl and shaven crown;
But now, redeemed by Smibert's faithful hand,
Of immortality secure you stand.
When nature into ruin shall be hurled,
And the last conflagration burn the world,
This piece shall then survive the general evil,—
For flames, we know, cannot consume the Devil."¹

His satirical wit sometimes took a more deliberate and a larger flight, as is shown in several rather notable pieces of his that have been preserved. One of these is a parody on a hymn—a beautiful and impressive hymn—written at sea by Mather Byles;² another is "A Mournful Lamentation for the sad and deplorable death of Mr. Old Tenor;"³ another is "The Grand Arcanum Detected; or, A wonderful phenomenon explained, which has baffled the scrutiny of many ages; by Me, Phil. Arcanos, Gent. Student in Astrology;"⁴ and still another is "An Entertainment for a Winter Evening," being a satire upon an ostentatious Masonic celebration in Boston on Saint John's day. In the latter, the poet notices, particularly, the march of the brotherhood from the tavern to the church, the chaplain's discourse there, and then the march of the brotherhood back again from the church to the tavern :

¹ Samuel L. Knapp, "Biographical Sketches of Eminent Lawyers, Statesmen, and Men of Letters," 135.

² Both the hymn and its parody are in "The Belknap Papers," 5 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. II. 70-72.

³ Originally printed in 1750, on a half-sheet of foolscap paper; reprinted in "Am. Journal of Numismatics," April, 1871, 80-81.

⁴ S. Kettell, "Specimens of Am. Poetry," III. 382.

"Come, goddess, and our ears regale
 With a diverting Christmas tale.
 O come, and in thy verse declare
 Who were the men, and what they were,
 And what their names, and what their fame,
 And what the cause for which they came,
 To house of God from house of ale,
 And how the parson told his tale;
 How they returned, in manner odd,
 To house of ale, from house of God."¹

 Masons at church! Strange auditory!
 And yet we have as strange in story.
 For saints, as history attests,
 Have preached to fishes, birds, and beasts.

 So good Saint Francis, man of grace,
 Himself preached to the braying race;
 And further, as the story passes,
 Addressed them thus—'My brother asses.'"²

His version of the discourse is somewhat ludicrous; and in depicting the march back to the tavern, he gives burlesque portraits of conspicuous and well-known personages in the procession. One of these personages, a worthy citizen by the name of Pue, distinguished for habits that gave a brilliant color to his nose, is thus described:

"Who's he comes next? 'Tis Pue by name,
 Pue by his nose well known to fame;
 This, when the generous juice recruits,
 Around a brighter radiance shoots.
 So, on some promontory's height,
 For Neptune's sons the signal light
 Shines fair, and fed by unctuous stream
 Sends off to sea a livelier beam."³

IX.

During the entire colonial age, Americans lived under some menace of harm, either from the Indians, or from the

¹ Second edition, 5-6.

² Ibid. 7-8.

³ Ibid. 13.

French, or from both. Hence, they lived in a state of constant war, or of constant readiness for war. As might be expected, the vehement martial spirit engendered by such conditions, found voice and stimulation in numerous war-songs that made up at least in ferocity for what they lacked in poetical merit; while the most memorable incidents in all these military campaigns were enacted over again in rough popular ballads, such as "The Gallant Church," "Smith's Affair at Sidelong Hill," "The Godless French Soldier," and especially "Lovewell's Fight."¹

In the year 1756, there appeared a little book, without mention of the place of publication or of the author's Christian name, bearing this title: "Tilden's Miscellaneous Poems on Divers Occasions, chiefly to animate and rouse the soldiers." In his preface, the author describes himself as a man above seventy years of age. He excuses himself "for digging up rusty talents out of the earth, so long lain hid," by saying that, when young, he "was bashful and could not stand the gust of a laugh," but, that having for sixty years seen many an old scribbler come off with impunity, he was at last emboldened to venture upon authorship himself. How much the soldiers must have been animated and roused by "Tilden's Miscellaneous Poems," may be inferred from the following specimen of them:

" Kind sirs, if that you will accept
This petty pamphlet as a gift,
With all the powers I have left,
I will consult your honor;

¹ These titles are in R. W. Griswold, "Curiosities of Am. Lit." 26. "Lovewell's Fight" is printed in that book; also, in Samuel Penhallow, "Indian Wars," 129-136. A song-writer deserving some slight mention is John Osborn, born 1713, graduated at Harvard 1735; and died 1753. His most notable production is "A Whaling Song," said to have been long in use among our sailors. It is reprinted in S. Kettell, "Specimens Am. Poetry," I. 120-122. It is fortunate that his verses were acceptable on the sea—they had small chance of being so on land. He was probably a poet among sailors, and a sailor among poets.

But if you throw her quite away,
 As I confess you justly may,
 I've nothing further for to say,
 But spit and tread upon her."¹

Another poet, whom we are now to speak of, should be ushered into this history with the blast of a bugle and the roar of artillery; for, by his own account, he was, above all other things, a battle-bard, revelling in rhymes and bloodshed and the blaze of war. He published two very military and sonoric poems, upon the title-pages of which he proclaimed himself as "John Maylem, Philo-Bellum." The first of these poems is "The Conquest of Louisburg,"² and is a narrative, in rhymed pentameters, of the exhilarating effort of New England heroism, indicated by the title. The whole poem is tumultuous, gory, and gigantesque, as these lines may show:

"But lo! while ready for the charge they stood,
 Death, blunderbuss, artillery, and blood!
 Blue smoke and purple flame around appear,
 And the hot bullets hail from front to rear.
 Tremendous Fate by turns incessant flies,
 While the black sulphur clouds the azure skies,
 And ghastly savages, with fearful yell,
 Invoke their kindred of profoundest hell."

This gusty warrior, who could hardly have moved upon his enemy with any weapons more awe-inspiring or destructive than his own verses, published another poem, named "Gallic Perfidy."³ In this work, he tells the story of the capture of himself and his military companions, at the hands of Indians and Frenchmen under Montcalm; of his own great sufferings during his captivity; finally, of his redemption and return. He begins by informing us that he is the same poetic individual,

"who, of late, in epic strains essayed,
 And sung the hero on Acadia's plains;"

¹ "Tilden's Miscellaneous Poems," 18.

² Boston, 1758.

³ Boston, 1758.

also, that he now intends to sing again, and about something else :

"But yet in rougher strain ; for softer rhyme
Seems not adapt to this my solemn theme."¹

Having thus given a timely hint of the peculiarly awful nature of the subject to be sung about, he pauses in order to invoke an inspiration that shall be appropriate. Certainly, no common one will answer the present purpose :

"Not to invoke
A vulgar muse,—ye powers of Fury, lend
Some mighty frenzy to enrage my breast
With solemn song, beyond all nature's strain !
For such the scene of which I mean to sing."²

His prayer appears to have been instantaneously answered ; for, in the very next line, he is able to chronicle this state of things :

"Enough ! I rave !—the Furies rack my brain !
I feel their influence now inspire my song !
My laboring muse swells with the raving god !
I feel him here ! My head turns round !—'twill burst !
So have I seen a bomb, with livid train,
Emitted from a mortar, big with death,
And fraught, full fraught, with hell's combustibles,
Lay dreadful on the ground ; then with a force
Stupendous, shiver in a thousand atoms !
But, on, my muse !"³

X.

In the year 1740, there died at Cambridge, at the age

¹ "Gallic Perfidy," 2.

² Ibid. 3.

³ Ibid. 3. For this remarkable poet our literature is indebted to Harvard College, where he was graduated in 1715. The ordinary accounts of him say that he died in 1742. As, however, the capture of Louisburg did not take place until 1745, and as he wrote a poem on that affair, it seems somewhat improbable that he was then dead. Indeed, I have come across no satisfactory evidence to show that he is dead yet.

of thirty-six, a man named John Adams, who as scholar, preacher, and poet, had won high reputation for himself. He was the son of a Nova-Scotian; was of the Harvard class of 1721; had served as minister in Newport and in Philadelphia; seemed to his friends to be quite a prodigy of genius and learning, being a master of nine languages, and familiar with the best writings in ancient and modern literatures; during his lifetime had gained special glory by his verses, particularly a satirical poem on the love of money. His death came as a premature and cruel ending of a career that promised very considerable things. Five years afterward, the principal fragments of his poetic estate were gathered up and printed in a book, entitled "*Poems on Several Occasions.*" It contains translations from the Bible and from Horace, and such not unprecedented things as verses on "*Melancholy,*" "*Contentment,*" "*Joy,*" "*Society,*" "*The Perfection of Beauty,*" and "*The King of Zion;*"—poems not absolutely indispensable to the world's continued existence or peace of mind. Doubtless, the Reverend John Adams was an accomplished, pious, and pleasant gentleman in his time; but in poetry he sounded no note that was not conventional and imitative.

In the year 1744, there came from the press in Boston a little book of somewhat ambitious aspect, "*A Collection of Poems by Several Hands.*" Being the product of a literary combination, it was doubtless looked upon at the time as a work representative of the poetic taste and skill then attained in the land; and it has since been described as a landmark of literary progress up to that date. If it had such significance, the indications are rather depressing; they report little more than weak reverberations of the imagery and the syllables of Alexander Pope. The book seems, in fact, to have been the offspring of an amiable conspiracy on the part of some literary friends of Mather Byles, to accomplish—and with his own entire approbation—the poetical apotheosis of that gentleman, and to induce the public to believe that one of the most

gifted of its pulpit orators was likewise a very great poet. The first poem, attributed to the Reverend John Adams, is a metrical gush of adulation directed toward Byles. The latter is the

"charming poet whose distinguished lays
Excite our wonder, and surmount our praise;"¹

and he is explicitly told to his face that there are points of striking resemblance between himself and John Milton:

"You imitate his airy rapid flights,
And mount with ardor to his godlike heights."²

Another poem, extending the personal comparison, asserts that Byles,

"Harvard's honor, and New England's hope,
Bids fair to rise and sing and rival Pope."³

Another poem, after reciting the reproaches that had been cast upon New England for poetic barrenness, finds in the lofty genius of Byles the prospect of New England's speedy vindication:

"At length our [Byles] aloft transfers his name,
And binds it on the radiant wings of fame."⁴

Another poem, written by a lady, declares that a certain

"pleased goddess triumphs to pronounce
The name of [Byles], Pope, Homer, all at once."⁵

Among the treasures of this volume, not directly refer-

¹ "A Collection of Poems," etc. 3.

² Ibid. 3.

³ Ibid. 13.

⁴ Ibid. 13. In examining these poems, I have used the volume that belonged first to Mather Byles himself, then to his daughter, "Th. Byles, given her by her father, Feb. 14, 1763," then to George Ticknor, then to Charles Deane, and finally by the generosity of the latter to the Mass. Hist. Soc. In some passages where Byles is referred to, five asterisks are given instead of the letters of his name; but in the volume used by me, his name is written over these asterisks, apparently by himself.

⁵ Ibid. 44.

ring to Mather Byles, we find a dulcet and platitudinous pastoral introducing our well-remembered friends, "Belinda," and "Strephon;" also "circling arms," "surrendering charms," several "swains," a fair assortment of "pangs," besides one "yielding fair," who is "abandoned to despair," together with numerous other things of a similar nature. Here, also, are a couple of puerile ballads on military events, some unusually silly nursery-rhymes, and even—so low does the book descend—"A Commencement Ode." Upon the other hand, there are a very few pieces that are not contemptible, the best one being entitled "The Comet." It is attributed to Mather Byles himself, and is in his usual style when serious and eloquent.

Peter Oliver, whose name in our civil history rests under the shadow of unpatriotic subservience to the English crown in the great struggle of the Americans for their rights, had an earlier fame among us of a gentler and pleasanter kind; a fame procured by his uncommon talents as a writer. He was born in 1713, was graduated at Harvard in 1730, and settling upon his estate at Middleborough, devoted his life for many years to agriculture, literature, and politics. The most satisfactory token that remains to us of his gifts, is a poem, published at Boston in 1757, in honor of an accomplished and noble-minded colonial statesman, Josiah Willard, who had died at an advanced age the year before. The poem, though clad in the orthodox metrical garb of the day,—especially having some vestments borrowed from the wardrobes of Thomson and of Young,—has likewise a strength of its own, an individual spirit not quite smothered under its conventionalisms.

XI.

King George the Second died in October, 1760; and the English people, who, since the downfall of the Stuarts, had seen upon their throne an almost unbroken succession of foreign monarchs, now welcomed with universal

joy the accession of a king of England who was also a native of England. This joy, abundant throughout the three kingdoms both in noise and in heartiness, was, in the American colonies of England, certainly not less hearty or noisy; and among many other forms of expression, it uttered itself here in one most elaborate and most sumptuous literary form. The oldest college in America, observing that the English universities had laid before his Majesty "their poetical oblations," conceived the idea of conveying to the king its own loyal emotion in the same reputable manner. Accordingly, there was a strong muster to the undertaking, of all the available culture and genius of Harvard College, among both its faculty and its graduates, with the worthy intent of producing a series of poems in Latin, Greek, and English, that should bewail the exit of one king and belaud the advent of another, and at the same time represent to Europe the progress thus far made, in the new world, in the most elegant studies.

Unfortunately, the inspiration that gives birth to great poetry does not often come from its vasty deep in response to the call of any sort of ceremonial subpœna. Without doubt, this planet of ours bears upon it at present the beautiful burden of innumerable volumes of official poetry,—tomes throbbing with most metrical and sonorous joy and sorrow, carefully compounded in deference to high command; but seldom is such a thing as "Lycidas" to be met with among these fabrications. Let us, therefore, with our expectations well chastened, draw near to this noble and famous quarto, in which Harvard College, on a fitting occasion, enshrined its very filial and very colonial grief and gladness; in which, likewise, it deposited the evidence of the mechanical expertness then attained in America in the manufacture of books and of poetry: "*Pietas et Gratulatio Collegii Cantabrigiensis Apud Nov-Anglos. Bostoni-Massachusettsensium. Typis J. Green & J. Russell.—MDCCLXI.*"

The work is introduced by a graceful letter in prose, addressed to the new king, and signed by the president and fellows of Harvard. It makes modest reference to the remoteness and obscurity of the college, and expresses great loyalty to the English crown, and great hope respecting the generosity and justice of the monarch who had just begun to wear it: "Your Majesty is raised by heaven to provide in the new world a retreat for the wretched inhabitants of the old,—an asylum to which they may retire from the reach of war, and set themselves down in peace, sure to reap the fruits of industry, secure in the enjoyment of their civil and religious liberties, and exempt from the miseries which distress most other countries." The letter does not altogether omit to remind his Majesty of the propriety of some "royal favor and patronage" for the college; it utters likewise the belief that America is now to become "a more interesting object to Great Britain" than ever before—a belief that was entirely justified by events; and it concludes with a promise on the part of the college so to educate its pupils "that they may be in their future stations grateful as well as useful subjects to the best of kings"—a promise not entirely justified by events.

The book contains one hundred and six pages of typography, which is exquisite; and thirty-one pieces of poetry, the exquisiteness of which is less obvious. Of these poems, three are in Greek, sixteen in Latin, twelve in English; all the writers save one—Sir Francis Bernard—being scholars of American birth and training.¹ Glancing, first, at the poems produced in the ancient languages, we find that the Greek odes show a fondness for Homeric words and forms; that they are Homeric even in their devia-

¹ Respecting the authorship of particular pieces, there are several traditions; but as these traditions are conflicting, I have not here mentioned any of them. The chief value of the book is in its aggregate character as representing the most advanced stage of classical and literary culture reached in America in the colonial time.

tions from the syntax of Attic Greek; and that they contain some metrical irregularities, corresponding to those met with in Sappho, and the other lyric poets belonging to the archaic period of the language. Of the Latin odes, the classical purity is in the main unexceptionable; though there are a few faulty constructions, besides a tendency to use certain words and phrases in meanings unusual in classical Latin, together with a habit of placing some words out of their regular positions in the sentence.¹ As regards their versification, it may be said that the hexameters and pentameters have no positive blemishes, unless unmusical lines be counted as such; but that in the Alcaic and Sapphic stanzas there are a few notable faults in metre, in rhythm, and even in quantity.²

Naturally, our principal interest is in the English poems of the book; and we note, first of all, the entire conformity of the writers to the poetic manner then prevalent in England—a dialect fluent, automatic, insincere. Making allowance for this fault—a venial one—we find the work, even as poetry, in some respects creditable; a fact all the more surprising, since the incidents that called this poetry into existence,—the death of an individual like George the Second, and the accession of another individual like George the Third,—are incidents supremely unpoetic. Undoubtedly, the mourning in these poems is official. Here is the full, round chant of formal laudation and ceremonious sorrow; tears that flow only from impossible eyes, and groans that no one utters except from a sense of duty, and then only in verse. Compared with the poetry produced in England with reference to the same events, very likely this, born in America, was especially honest,—having, in fact, the genuineness of feeling that comes of provincial ignorance, and the enchantment about monarchs

¹ For example, *que* is in these odes out of its regular position as many as ten or twelve times.

² As *èlegantioris*.

that is one of the many advantages of being at a distance from them.

In celebrating the glory of the dead king, his American eulogists point to the material prosperity of England under his reign :

“ Commerce, o’er the broad-backed sea
Extending far on floating isles,
Imported India’s wealth, and rich
Peruvian spoils.”¹

But the death of George the Second seems to these ingenuous poets to be an event so vast and so disastrous as to call for some very sympathetic recognition on the part of Nature :

“ thy noontide ray,
Phœbus, suspend; ye clouds, obscure the day;
Her face let Cynthia veil;
Thick darkness spread her wing,
And the night-raven sing;
While Britons their sad fate bewail.”²

In her sorrow at the death of George the Second, Britannia herself is observed on “her sea-girt shore,” “with head reclined” :

“ White Melancholy on her brow
Sat brooding, with her raven wing
Shading those features which till then
With majesty unrivalled shone.”³

And, indeed, all these pathetic demonstrations were most appropriate both for Nature and for Britannia, if the dead king had been endowed even with a tithe of the personal and kingly virtues here attributed to him. It seems to be conceded by these New England bards that there were indeed a few great heroes and great kings before George the Second; and yet the greatest of them, Cæsar and Alexander, are mentioned, only to give em-

¹ “ *Pietas et Gratulatio*,” 14.

² *Ibid.* 17.

³ *Ibid.* 43.

phasis to the fact that they are quite unworthy of being brought into comparison with the one English king and hero lately deceased :

" No more let ancient times their heroes boast,
 Since all their fame in George's praise is lost;
 Not Greece—her Alexanders ; Cæsars—Rome.
 For worth and virtue, view our monarch's tomb.
 Restless ambition dwelt in Cæsar's mind;
 He murdered nations and enslaved mankind,
 He found a generous people great and free,
 And gave them tyrants for their liberty.
 The glorious Alexander, half divine,
 Whose godlike deeds in ancient records shine,
 Dropt his divinity at every feast,
 And lost the god and hero in the beast.
 Shall, then, our monarch be with these compared ?
 Or George's glory with a Cæsar shared ?
 No—we indignant spurn the unworthy claim ;
 George shines unrivalled in the lists of fame."¹

In fact, to these rapturous American poets even Death seems rather insolent in having presumed to aim his dart at such a king as George the Second :

" Insulting victor ! boast this trophy won !
 That your broad shade hath darkened Britain's sun ;
 But, know ! such kings as George but take their way
 Through your thick darkness to immortal day.
 Indulgent Heaven with splendor rayed him down
 To swell the lustre of the British crown ;
 But virtues, such as his, are not confined
 To small domains ; they encircle all mankind.
 Bourbons to humble, Brunswicks were ordained :
 Those mankind's rights destroyed, but these regained."¹

But for all the grief consequent upon the death of the king, there is at least some consolation : if one George be

¹ " *Pietas et Gratulatio*," 21-22.

² *Ibid.* 11-12. It is amusing to remember how, a very few years afterward, the opinion expressed in the last couplet was, in American opinion, exactly reversed.

snatched away, Heaven is merciful to this extent, that another George remains :

“ In the forehead of the East
 See the gilded morning star—
 Of glad day the harbinger.
 Sighing, now, and tears are ceased :
 Still George survives ; his virtues shine
 In him who sprung alike from Brunswick’s royal line.”¹

Another of these colonial rhapsodists, not dreaming of the rough blows with which the near future was to shatter all these illusions of transatlantic fealty to the Georges, exclaims :

“ But say, my muse, say, who is he
 The scarcely vacant throne who fills ?
 ’Tis he ! the heaven-inspired youth !
 The falling purple robe who caught,
 And all the virtues of the grandsire claims ; ”²

while still another poet speaks of the joy with which the whole British empire sees

“ ascend the throne
 A blooming monarch who is all her own.”³

No one who duly considers this magnificent effusion of provincial gush and king-worship, from the most accomplished gentlemen in America in 1761,—this premeditated and ostentatious torrent of adulatory drivel with reference to such dull fellows as the Brunswicks,—will ever imagine that our war for independence came upon us a moment too soon ; indeed, it appears to have been as necessary for our intellects, as it was for our liberties.

¹ “ *Pietas et Gratulatio*,” 18.

² *Ibid.* 50.

³ *Ibid.* 24.

CHAPTER XII.

NEW ENGLAND: THE DYNASTY OF THE MATHERS.

- I.—The founder of the dynasty, Richard Mather—His flight from England and career in America—His traits—His writings—An ecclesiastical politician—His love of study.
- II.—Increase Mather—His American birth and breeding—His residence in Ireland and England—Returns to New England—His great influence there—Pulpit-orator, statesman, courtier, college president—His learning—His laboriousness in study—His manner in the pulpit—The literary qualities of his writings—Specimens—Number and range of his published works—His "Illustrious Providences"—Origin of the book—Its value.
- III.—Cotton Mather—His preëminence—The adulation received by him—His endowments—His precocity—The development of his career—His religious character and discipline—His intellectual accomplishments—His habits as a reader—The brilliancy of his talk—Contemporaneous admiration—The watchword of his life—The multitude of his books—Characteristic titles—The fame of his "Magnalia"—His anxieties respecting its publication—Its scope—His advantages and disadvantages for historical writing—Estimate of the historical character of the "Magnalia"—The best of his subsequent writings—"Bonifacius"—"Psalterium Americanum"—"Manuductio ad Ministerium"—Its counsels to a young prophet—Study of Hebrew, of history, of natural philosophy—Assault on Aristotle—The place of Cotton Mather in American literature—The last of the Fantastics in prose—Traits of his style—Pedantry—His style not agreeable to his later contemporaries—His theory of style—Defence of his own style against his critics.
- IV.—Samuel Mather—His days and deeds—A stanch patriot—The end of the dynasty.

I.

IN the year 1634, the Archbishop of York, being of an honest mind to snip the pestiferous weeds of dissent that were then sprouting up in his province, sent forth his visitors into Lancashire, for the prosecution of the good work. Straightway, these pleasant gentlemen, holding court at Wigan, summoned before them one Richard

Mather, who humbly confessed that he had been minister of the church at Toxteth for fifteen years, and yet had never in all that time worn a surplice; whereupon, one of these reverend visitors "swore, 'It had been better for him that he had begotten seven bastards.'"¹ Not having any such extenuating achievements to plead in his behalf, the poor parson, much against his will, "betook himself to a private life;" and in April, of the following year, he made his way stealthily, and in disguise, to Bristol, and thence got ship for Boston, where he arrived on the seventeenth of August, 1635. The long voyage was for him both tedious and perilous; but it brought to him, likewise, its compensations,—one being a spectacle that forever relieved his mind of some previous carnal embarrassment in connection with the difficult story of Jonah: "In the afternoon we saw mighty whales spewing up water in the air, like the smoke of a chimney, and making the sea about them white and hoary, as it is said in Job; of such incredible bigness that I will never wonder that the body of Jonah could be in the belly of a whale."²

At the time of his arrival in Boston, Richard Mather was thirty-nine years of age; a man of extensive and precise learning in the classics, in the Scriptures, and in divinity; already a famous preacher. "His voice," we are told, "was loud and big; and uttered with a deliberate vehemency, it procured unto his ministry an awful and very taking majesty."³ It was of him that the illustrious Thomas Hooker had said, "My brother Mather is a mighty man."⁴ No wonder that, upon the arrival in New England of this same mighty man, together with his loud and big voice, there was among the churches some brotherly strife for the possession of him. Dorchester, as it chanced, was the fortunate church; for, in 1636, he ac-

¹ "Magnalia," I. 448.

² Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 465.

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³ "Magnalia," I. 452.

⁴ Ibid.

cepted its call, and in its service he abode, until April the twenty-second, 1669, when "he quietly breathed forth his last; after he had been about seventy-three years a citizen of the world, and fifty years a minister in the church of God."¹

This man, "the progenitor of all the Mathers in New England,"² and the first of a line of great preachers and great men of letters that continued to hold sway there through the entire colonial era, had in himself the chief traits that distinguished his family through so long a period;—great physical endurance, a voracious appetite for the reading of books, an alarming propensity to the writing of books, a love of political leadership in church and state, the faculty of personal conspicuousness, finally, the homiletic gift.

His numerous writings were, of course, according to the demand of his time and neighborhood;—sermons, a catechism, a treatise on justification, public letters upon church government, several controversial documents, the preface to the Old Bay Psalm Book, and many of the marvels of metrical expression to be viewed in the body of that work.³

In recognition of his prominence and power in ecclesiastical politics, one of his contemporaries wrote this epitaph for him: "Vixerat in synodis, moritur moderator in illis."⁴ Yet, as was the case with each of his famous descendants, his true life seemed to be among his books; and he did his share to create the tradition of heroic studiousness attaching to the clergy of colonial New England. On "the morning before he died, he importuned the friends that watched with him, to help him into the room where he thought his usual works and books expected him. To satisfy his importunity, they began to

¹ "Magnalia," I. 456.

² Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 480, note.

³ A list of his writings in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 78-79.

⁴ John Eliot, "Biograph. Dict." 306.

lead him thither ; but finding himself unable to get out of his lodging-room, he said, ' I see I am not able. I have not been in my study several days ; and is it not a lamentable thing that I should lose so much time ? ' " ¹

This dying speech of the first of the Mathers was, in its spirit, the living speech of all the rest of them, for more than a hundred years. Above all other things, they were a bookish clan. To them, that moment seemed lost, in which, if not publicly preaching or privately plotting, they were not either reading a book, or writing one.

II.

Of the six sons of Richard Mather, four became famous preachers, two of them in Ireland and in England, other two in New England ; the greatest of them all being the youngest, born at Dorchester, June twenty-first, 1639, and at his birth adorned with the name of Increase, in grateful recognition of " the increase of every sort, wherewith God favored the country about the time of his nativity. " ²

Even in childhood he began to display the strong and eager traits that gave distinction and power to his whole life, and that bore him impetuously through the warfare of eighty-four mortal years. At twelve, he entered Harvard College, taking his Bachelor's degree at seventeen. His Latin oration, at Commencement, was so vigorous an assault upon the philosophy of Aristotle, that President Chauncey would have stopped him, had not the Cambridge pastor, Jonathan Mitchell—a man of great authority—cried out in intercession, " Pergat, quaeso, nam doctissime disputat. " In 1657, on his nineteenth birthday, he preached in his father's pulpit his first sermon,—a sermon so able in matter and in manner, that it greatly added to the general belief that here was a youth from whom more was to be heard by and by. Twelve days afterward, he

¹ " *Magnalia*," I. 453.

² C. Mather, " *Parentator*," 1-5.

sailed for Dublin, where his eldest brother, Samuel, was a noted preacher, and where, entering himself as a student of Trinity College, he took, with high reputation, his Master's degree in the following year,—declining a fellowship. During the subsequent three years, he exercised his talents as a preacher, with great effect, in various parts of England and in Guernsey; and in 1661, not deeming the outlook an agreeable one, just then, for dissenters in the mother-country, he abandoned his purpose of making a career there, and returned to his native land.

At once, invitations poured in upon him from “as many places as there are signs for the sun in the Zodiac.” Declining to be settled anywhere in haste, he divided his services between his father's church at Dorchester and the North Church of Boston; and at last, in May, 1664, he consented to be made minister of the latter church, which, thenceforward, to the end of his own life, and to the end of the life of his more famous son, continued to be the tower and the stronghold of the Mathers in America.

Thus, before his twenty-sixth birthday, Increase Mather had found the place of his work for life,—a prominent pulpit in the chief town of the New England theocracy. There, wielding the most tremendous weapon of influence known in such a community, he continued to fulminate, to the delight of his adherents, to the great terror of his foes, for almost sixty years; and by force of his learning, his logic, his sense, his eloquence, his tireless energy, his adroitness in intrigue, his sagacity and audacity in partisan command, he became, during the first thirty years of that time, the most powerful man in all that part of the world. In the desperate conflict in which Massachusetts contended with James the Second for its own existence, Increase Mather was a potent counsellor of the people; and for several years, as the representative of his colony at the court of James, and of William and Mary, the Boston pastor proved himself an able and successful diplomat. For sixteen years, also, he filled the high office of president of

Harvard College, without ceasing to be pastor of North Church. From about 1694 and until his death in 1723, his political prestige, even his ecclesiastical prestige, greatly declined; yet to the last, he was a sovereign man throughout New England, illustrious for great talents and great services, both at home and abroad.

Here, then, was a person, born in America, bred in America,—a clean specimen of what America could do for itself in the way of keeping up the brave stock of its first imported citizens; a man every way capable of filling any place in public leadership made vacant by the greatest of the Fathers; probably not a whit behind the best of them in scholarship, in eloquence, in breadth of view, in knowledge of affairs, in every sort of efficiency.

As to learning, it has been said¹ that he even exceeded all other New-Englanders of the colonial time, except his own son, Cotton. On the day when he was graduated at our little rustic university, he had the accomplishments usual among the best scholars of the best universities of the old world; he could converse fluently in Latin, and could read and write Hebrew and Greek; and his numberless publications in after life bear marks of a range of learned reading that widened as he went on in years, and drew into its hospitable gulf some portions of nearly all literatures, especially the most obscure and uncouth.

His habits as a student were those of the mighty theologians and pulpit-orators among whom he grew up. He had the appalling capacity of working in his study sixteen hours a day. One now contemplates with a mixture of admiration and horror—alleviated by incredulity—the picture that has been left us by filial hands, of one of this man's ordinary working-days: "In the morning, repairing to his study (where his custom was to sit up very late, even until midnight and perhaps after it) he deliberately read a chapter, and made a prayer, and then plied what

¹ By Enoch Pond, "Life of I. Mather," 142.

of reading and writing he had before him. At nine o'clock, he came down and read a chapter, and made a prayer with his family. He then returned unto the work of the study. Coming down to dinner, he quickly went up again, and begun the afternoon with another prayer. There he went on with the work of the study till the evening. Then with another prayer he again went unto his Father; after which he did more at the work of the study. At nine o'clock, he came down to his family sacrifices. Then he went up again to the work of the study, which anon he concluded with another prayer; and so he betook himself unto his repose."¹

His power as a pulpit-orator was very great, and it was bought at a great price. On Monday morning he began his sermons for the next Sunday, and continued to work upon them diligently until Friday night; on Saturday he committed them to memory. Of course, on Sunday, armed thus at every point, he could march into his pulpit with confident tread. Using no manuscript, he spoke without hesitation, "with a grave and wise deliberation," often with impassioned vehemence. He had, like his father, a commanding voice; and he used it with great effect, at times, indeed, "with such a tonitruous cogency that the hearers would be struck with an awe, like what would be produced on the fall of thunderbolts."² It was a common saying of his contemporaries, that Increase Mather was "a complete preacher."

From a literary point of view, his writings certainly have considerable merit. His style is far better than that of his son,—simpler, more terse, more sinewy and direct, less bedraggled in the dust of pedantry; it has remarkable energy; in many places it is so modern in tone that it would not seem strange in any pulpit now, except for the numerous quotations from Scripture, as well as for an occasional use of some Latin or Greek or Hebrew phrase. Thus, de-

¹ C. Mather, "Parentator," 181.

² Ibid. 216.

picting the victory of Christ over the Devil, the preacher exclaims: "He has led captivity captive. He has disarmed the Devil and all his angels, and, as it were, tied them to his triumphal chariot, and exposed them openly in the sight of heaven and earth."¹ The worth of a human soul—that enticing and ineffable theme of pulpit-rhetoric in every age—he proclaims in this pithy and vivid manner: "One soul is of more worth than all the world. . . . Every man has . . . a body that must die, and shall die, and a soul that shall never die. To save such a soul is a mightier thing than to save all the bodies in the world."² In the battle of life, here upon the earth, we are not engaged, he tells us, in an obscure field, or unwatched by throngs of spectators: "Let us always remember what eyes are upon us. There are glorious eyes, which, though we see not them, are observing us in all our motions. The eyes of holy angels are upon us. . . . And the eyes of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, behold us. . . . And the eyes of God behold us. . . . It is reported of a faithful minister of Christ, that there was written on the walls of his study, '*Deus videt, angeli adstant, conscientia testabitur*,'—God seeth thee, angels are by thee, thy own conscience will be a witness how thou dost behave thyself."³ Sometimes, he casts his thought into an illustration so luminous and so shrewd that it makes further argument unnecessary; as when he says of the government of Massachusetts under Sir Edmund Andros: "The Foxes were now made the administrators of justice to the Poultry."

The publications of Increase Mather defy mention, except in the form of a catalogue. From the year 1669, when he had reached the age of thirty, until the year 1723, when he died, hardly a twelvemonth was permitted to pass in which he did not solicit the public attention through the press. An authentic list of his works would include at

¹ "Several Sermons," 13.

² *Ibid.* 13-14.

³ Sermon on death of Rev. John Baily, 6-7.

least ninety-two titles.¹ The most of these works are sermons; but as sermons, they sweep the entire circuit of themes, sacred and secular, on which men employed their thoughts in those days,—divinity, ethics, casuistry, church government, law, English and American politics, history, prophecy, demonology, angelology, crime, poverty, ignorance, dancing, the Indian question, earthquakes, comets, winds, conflagrations, drunkenness, and the small-pox.

Of all the great host of Increase Mather's publications, perhaps only one can be said to have still any power of walking alive on the earth,—the book commonly known by a name not given to it by the author, "Remarkable Providences." The origin of this book is worth mention. As early as 1658, a number of Puritan ministers in England and in Ireland combined to put on record, and finally to publish, authentic accounts of extraordinary interpositions of Providence in recent human affairs. After some progress had been made in the work, it was dropped. Subsequently, the manuscript was sent to New England, probably by Milton's friend, Samuel Hartlib. For many years it lay in obscurity in Boston, until, by good fortune, it fell into the energetic hands of Increase Mather. The plan was exactly suited to a mind like his; and after communicating it to his clerical brethren, and receiving their cordial encouragement to go on with it, he sent forth proposals through New England, calling upon ministers and other reputable persons to forward to him written narratives of Providential events that had occurred under their own observation. In 1684, the book was published, under the title of "An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences."² Thus the work is simply a compilation of anecdotes sent to the editor, or culled by him from his own observation and from books, the whole being plentifully

¹ One list is given in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 156-157; another and better list in J. L. Sibley, "Harv. Grad." I. 438-463.

² Reprinted, London, 1856.

decorated with comments and speculations of his own. The materials are classified under these topics: "remarkable sea-deliverances;" "some other remarkable preservations;" "remarkables about thunder and lightning;" "things preternatural which have happened in New England;" "demons and possessed persons;" "apparitions;" "deaf and dumb persons;" remarkable tempests, earthquakes, and floods in New England; remarkable judgments upon Quakers, drunkards, and enemies of the church; finally, "some remarkables at Norwich in New England." It cannot be denied that the conception of the book is thoroughly scientific; for it is to prove by induction the actual presence of supernatural forces in the world. Its chief defect, of course, is its lack of all cross-examination of the witnesses, and of all critical inspection of their testimony, together with a palpable eagerness on the author's part to welcome, from any quarter of the earth or sea or sky, any messenger whatever, who may be seen hurrying toward Boston with his mouth full of marvels. The narratives, often vividly told, are tragic, or amusing, or disgusting, now and then merely stupid; in several particulars they anticipate the phenomena of modern spiritualism; while the philosophical disquisitions of the author are at once a laughable and an instructive memorial of the mental habits of very orthodox and very enlightened people in Protestant Christendom, in the seventeenth century.

III.

In the intellectual distinction of the Mather family, there seemed to be, for at least three generations, a certain cumulative felicity. The general acknowledgment of this fact is recorded in an old epitaph, composed for the founder of the illustrious tribe:

"Under this stone lies Richard Mather,
Who had a son greater than his father,
And eke a grandson greater than either."

This overtopping grandson was, of course, none other than Cotton Mather, the literary behemoth of New England in our colonial era ; the man whose fame as a writer surpasses, in later times and especially in foreign countries, that of any other pre-Revolutionary American, excepting Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin.

The twelfth of February, 1663, was the happy day on which he was bestowed upon the world,—the eldest of a family of ten children, his mother being the only daughter of the celebrated pulpit-orator, John Cotton. In himself, therefore, the forces and graces of two ancestral lines renowned for force and for grace, seemed to meet and culminate.

From his earliest childhood, and through all his days, he was gazed at and belauded by his immediate associates, as a being of almost supernatural genius, and of quite indescribable godliness. That his nature early became saturated with self-consciousness, and that he grew to be a vast literary and religious coxcomb, is a thing not likely to astonish any one who duly considers, first, the strong original aptitude of the man in that direction, and, secondly, the manner of his mortal life from the cradle to the grave,—the idol of a distinguished family, the prodigy both of school and of college, the oracle of a rich parish, the pet and demi-god of an endless series of sewing-societies.

It may be said of Cotton Mather, that he was born with an enormous memory, an enormous appetite for every species of knowledge, an enormous zeal and power for work, an enormous passion for praise. At his birth, also, he came into a household of books and of students. The first breath he drew was air charged with erudition. His toys and his playmates were books. The dialect of his childhood was the ponderous phraseology of philosophers and divines. To be a scholar was a part of the family inheritance. At eleven years of age, he was a freshman in Harvard College ; having, however, before

that time, read Homer and Isocrates, and many unusual Latin authors, and having, likewise, entered upon the congenial employment of exhorting his juvenile friends to lives of godliness, and even of writing "poems of devotion" for their private use. At fifteen, on taking his first degree, he had the pleasure of hearing the president of the college address to him, by name, in the presence of the great throng at commencement, a glowing compliment,—admirably constructed to ripen in this precocious and decidedly priggish young gentleman his already well-developed sense of his own importance. At eighteen, on taking his second degree, he delivered a learned and persuasive thesis, on "the divine origin of the Hebrew points."

One year before the event last mentioned, he began to preach. Being oppressed by a grievous habit of stammering, he was on the point of abandoning the ministry for the medical profession, when "that good old school-master, Mr. Corlet," told him that he could cure himself of his trouble, if he would but remember always to speak "with a dilated deliberation." He adopted the suggestion, and was cured.¹ At the age of twenty-two, he was made an associate of his father in the pastorship of North Church, Boston. There, in the pauseless prosecution of almost incredible labors, literary, philanthropic, oratorical, and social, he continued to the end of his days on earth. He departed this life in 1728, having been permitted to contemplate, for many years and with immense delight, the progress of his own fame, as it reverberated through Christendom.

Upon the whole, the picture of Cotton Mather, given to us in his own writings, and in the writings of those who knew him and loved him, is one of surpassing painfulness. We see a person whose intellectual endowments were quite remarkable, but inflated and perverted by egotism; him-

¹ S. Mather, "Life of C. Mather," 26.

self imposed upon by his own moral affectations; completely surrendered to spiritual artifice; stretched, every instant of his life, on the rack of ostentatious exertion, intellectual and religious, and all this partly for vanity's sake, partly for conscience' sake—in deference to a dreadful system of ascetic and pharisaic formalism, in which his nature was hopelessly enmeshed.

In his fourteenth year, he began the habit of frequent fasts and vigils, to which he attached a superstitious importance, and which he kept up with increasing intensity to the end of his life. He desired "to resemble a rabbi mentioned in the Talmud, whose face was black by reason of his fastings;"¹ and it was computed that, in the course of his life, the number of his special fast-days amounted to four hundred and fifty.² Once, in his old age, he abstained from all food three days together, and spent the time, as he expressed it, "in knocking at the door of heaven."

Moreover, he prescribed to himself a scheme of minute rules for the association of devout thoughts with every occurrence of the day or the night: "When he heard a clock strike, he could not help thinking and wishing that he might so number his days as to apply his heart to wisdom." "When he knocked at a door, the faith of our Saviour's promise was awakened in him—'Knock and it shall be opened unto you.'" "When he mended his fire, it was with a meditation how his heart and life might be rectified, and how, through the emendations of divine grace, his love and zeal might flame more agreeably." "When he put out his candle, it must be done with an address to the Father of Lights, that his light might not be put out in obscure darkness." "In drinking a dish of tea—of which he was a great admirer—he would take occasion for these thoughts, . . . that should have many sweet

¹ W. B. O. Peabody, "Life of C. Mather," 176.

² S. Mather, "Life of C. Mather," 110.

acknowledgments of the glorious Jesus in them. And whatever delight any of his senses took, it was soon sanctified and rendered more delightful, by his making such an improvement of it." "When the Doctor waked in the night, he would impose it as a law upon himself, ever, before he fell asleep again, to bring some glory of his Saviour into his meditations, and have some agreeable desire of his soul upon it." "When he washed his hands, he must think of the clean hands, as well as pure heart, which belong to the citizens of Zion." "And when he did so mean an action as paring his nails, he thought how he might lay aside all superfluity of naughtiness." "He had many years a morning cough; it every morning 'raised' proper dispositions of piety in him." "Upon the sight of a tall man, he said, 'Lord, give that man high attainments in Christianity; let him fear God above many:' a negro, 'Lord, wash that poor soul; make him white by the washing of thy Spirit:' a man going by without observing him, 'Lord, I pray thee help that man to take a due notice of Christ.'"¹ In his early days, Cotton Mather was a great sufferer from toothache; and, of course, "in these pains," instead of inferring that some of his teeth were decayed and needed to be pulled out, "he would set himself, as well as he could, to try his ways. He considered whether or no he had not sinned with his teeth. How? By sinful and excessive eating; and by evil speeches, for there are '*literae dentales*' used in them."² One would like to suppose that, at least in the matter of love and marriage, Cotton Mather gave himself some slight release from these fanatic pedantries. Not so; for we read that "he thought it advisable in his twenty-fourth year to marry. He first looked up to Heaven for direction, and heard the counsel of his friends. The person he first pitched upon, was"³—the one who had the honor of

¹ S. Mather, "Life of C. Mather," 101 et seq.

² Ibid. 61.

³ Ibid. 12.

marching for a few years at the head of his procession of three wives.

If, now, we may be permitted to stand, for some moments, in the presence of this great man, and to make a study of his literary significance in our annals, it is very likely that we shall be impressed, first of all, even as his contemporaries were, by his vast industry, the variety of his acquisitions, and his almost illimitable prolificacy.

At the age of sixteen, he had drawn up for himself systems of all the sciences. Besides the ancient languages, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, which he used with facility, he knew French, Spanish, and even one of the Indian tongues, and prided himself on having composed and published works in most of them. It was his ambition to be acquainted with all branches of knowledge, with all spheres of thought; to get sight of all books. His library was the largest private collection on the American continent. They who called upon him in his study, were instructed by this legend written in capitals above the door: "Be Short." He had no time to waste. He was always at work. They who beheld him marvelled at his power of dispatching most books at a glance, and yet of possessing all that was in them. "He would ride post through an author."¹ "He pencilled as he went along, and at the end reduced the substance to his commonplaces, to be reviewed at leisure; and all this with wonderful celerity."² The results of all his omnivorous readings were at perfect command; his talk overflowed with learning and wit: "he seemed to have an inexhaustible source of divine flame and vigor. . . . How instructive, learned, pious, and engaging was he in his private converse; superior company for the greatest of men. . . . How agreeably tempered with a various mixture of wit and cheerfulness."³ The readers of his books may, indeed, infer from

¹ S. Mather, "Life of C. Mather," 68.

² T. Prince, Pref. to "Life of C. Mather," by S. Mather.

³ T. Prince, Sermon on Death of C. Mather, 20-21.

them something of his splendid powers of intellect; but they cannot "imagine that extraordinary lustre of pious and useful literature, wherewith we were every day entertained, surprised, and satisfied, who dwelt in the directer rays, in the more immediate vision."¹ The people in daily association with him were, indeed, constantly amazed at "the capacity of his mind, the readiness of his wit, the vastness of his reading, the strength of his memory, . . . the tenor of a most entertaining and profitable conversation."²

On his death-bed, he gave to his son, Samuel, this final charge: "Remember only that one word—'Fructuosus.'"³ It seemed the hereditary motto of the Mathers. He himself could have uttered no word more descriptive of the passion and achievement of his own life. There is a chronological list⁴ of the publications made in America during the colonial time; and it is swollen and overlaid by the name of Cotton Mather, and by the polyglot and arduous titles of his books. We are told that in a single year, besides doing all his work as minister of a great metropolitan parish, and besides keeping sixty fasts and twenty vigils, he published fourteen books. The whole number of his separate writings published during his lifetime, exceeds three hundred and eighty-three. No wonder that his contemporaries took note of such fecundity. One of them exclaimed:

"Is the blest Mather necromancer turned?"⁵

Another one declared:

"Play is his toil, and work his recreation."⁶

Very likely, however, the astonishment we may feel at the multitude of his productions, will be considerably tem-

¹ T. Prince, Pref. to "Life of C. Mather," by S. Mather.

² Joshua Gee, Sermon on Death of C. Mather, 18.

³ S. Mather, "Life of C. Mather," 156.

⁴ By S. F. Haven, Jr. *Archæol. Am.* VI. 309-666.

⁵ B. Tompson, in "Magnalia," I. 20.

⁶ *Ibid.* 19.

pered if we force ourselves to the exertion of looking into them; for not many of these productions are large works, or represent labor beyond his direct preparations for the pulpit. As our eyes run along the columns crowded with the names of his books, we seem to get nearer to the intellectual character of the writer of them, and of the age he lived in, to find under what remote and freakish designations even very commonplace subjects are announced: "Adversus Libertinos; or, Evangelical Obedience Described;" "Boanerges, A Short Essay to strengthen the Impressions Produced by Earthquakes;" "Christianus per Ignem; or, a Disciple Warming of Himself and Owning of his Lord;" "Cohemoth, A Soul upon Recollection coming into Incontestable Sentiments of Religion;" "Hatzar-Maveth, Comfortable Words, the Comforts of One Walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death;" "Nails Fastened; or, Proposals of Piety Complied Withal;" "Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion, A Discourse which Directs the Female Sex how to Express the Fear of God, and Obtain Temporal and Eternal Blessedness;" "Orphanotrophium; or, Orphans Well-provided for in the Divine Providence;" "Fasciculus Viventium, Essay on a Soul Bound up in the Bundle of Life;" "Ecclesiæ Monilla, The Peculiar Treasure of the Almighty King Opened."

The most famous book produced by him,—the most famous book, likewise, produced by any American during the colonial time,—is one to which, in these pages, we have often gone for curious spoils: "Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England, from its first planting, in the year 1620, unto the year of our Lord 1698."¹

From the diary² of Cotton Mather, it appears that he

¹ First published in one folio volume, London, 1702; republished in America, in two vols. Hartford, 1820; second. Am. ed. 1853. The ed. last mentioned is the one referred to throughout the present work.

² Still in manuscript, and inaccessible to me. For my present extracts from it, I am indebted to an interesting paper by Charles Deane, in *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.* for 1862-1863, 404-414.

conceived the design of this work in 1693, he being then thirty years of age; that in 1695, he published a prospectus of it; that in August, 1697, he set apart a day for secret thanksgiving to God for divine help in finishing it; and that thenceforward until 1702, when the book came from the press in London, he had innumerable prayers, tears, prostrations, and elevations, respecting its safe transmission to England and its slow and dubious struggle into print. On the twenty-seventh of November, 1697, "I did, at the close of the day, prostrate on my study-floor, joyfully receive . . . assurances from Heaven, . . . that there are good news coming to me from England . . . about the future publication of my 'Church History.'" The twelfth of January, 1698, "I set apart . . . for the exercise of a secret fast before the Lord," for "the direction of Heaven about my 'Church History,' the time and way of my sending it into Europe, and the methods of its publication." On the fourth of March, 1698, "in the close of the day, as I lay prostrate on my study-floor, in the dust, before the Lord, . . . it was told me from heaven that" my Church History "shall be carried safe to England, and there employed for the service of my glorious Lord." On the sixth of June, 1701, "the Lord supports and comforts my faith about my 'Church History.'" On the thirteenth of June, 1701, "I received letters from London. . . . My 'Church History' is a bulky thing. . . . The impression will cost about six hundred pounds. The booksellers in London are cold about it." On the twelfth of February, 1702, though the publication of the book has been "thus long delayed and obstructed and clogged," "an heavenly afflatus causes me sometimes to fall into tears of joy, assured that the Lord has heard my supplications about this matter." On the fourth of April, 1702, "I was in much distress . . . concerning my 'Church History.' . . . Wherefore, I set apart a vigil this night. . . . Accordingly, in the dead of the night, I first sang some agreeable psalms; and then, casting myself prostrate into the dust, on my study-

floor, before the Lord, I confessed unto him the sins for which he might justly reject me and all my services." On the eleventh of April, in a vigil, "my mind is irradiated with celestial and angelical influences, assuring of me that my 'Church History' shall not be lost, but shall come abroad." On the twenty-ninth of October, 1702, "I first saw my 'Church History,' since the publication of it. A gentleman arrived here from Newcastle in England, that had bought it there." Wherefore, the following day "I set apart . . . for solemn thanksgiving unto God for his watchful and gracious providence over that work, and for the harvest of so many prayers and cares and tears and resignations as I had employed upon it."

The "*Magnalia*" is, indeed, what the author called it, "a bulky thing,"—the two volumes of the latest edition having upwards of thirteen hundred pages. Its scope may be sufficiently seen by a glance at the subjects of the seven books into which it is divided. The first book is a history of the settlement of New England; the second contains "the lives of the governors and the names of the magistrates that have been shields unto the churches of New England;" the third recounts "the lives of sixty famous divines, by whose ministry the churches of New England have been planted and continued;" the fourth is devoted to the history of Harvard College, and of "some eminent persons therein educated;" the fifth describes "the faith and order of the churches;" the sixth speaks of "many illustrious discoveries and demonstrations of the Divine Providence in remarkable mercies and judgments;" and the seventh, entitled "*A Book of the Wars of the Lord*," narrates "the afflictive disturbances which the churches of New England have suffered from their various adversaries"—the Devil, Separatists, Familists, Antinomians, Quakers, clerical impostors, and Indians.

Here is an imposing array of historical topics; and for the treatment of them, no other man ever had, or ever can have, such advantages as had Cotton Mather:—multi-

tudes of original papers of all sorts within easy reach, that have since perished ; personal acquaintance with all the great New England leaders or with those who had personally known them ; finally, access to innumerable and most valuable oral traditions, which afterward would have died for lack of record. On the other hand, it must be said that for the performance of careful and disinterested historical work, few men that have undertaken it, ever had greater disadvantages ; since there were in him traits that constituted an intellectual and moral inability to be either accurate or fair. He had an insuperable fondness for tumultuous, swelling, and flabby declamation, and for edifying remarks, in place of a statement of the exact facts in the case ; infinite credulity ; infinite carelessness ; finally, a disposition to stain the chaste pages of history with the tints of his family friendships and his family feuds.

Upon the whole, as an historian, he was unequal to his high opportunity. The "*Magnalia*" has great merits ; it has, also, fatal defects. In its mighty chaos of fables and blunders and misrepresentations, are of course lodged many single facts of the utmost value, personal reminiscences, social gossip, snatches of conversation, touches of description, traits of character and life, that can be found nowhere else, and that help us to paint for ourselves some living picture of the great men and the great days of early New England ; yet herein, also, history and fiction are so jumbled and shuffled together, that it is never possible to tell, without other help than the author's, just where the fiction ends and the history begins. On no disputed question of fact is the unaided testimony of Cotton Mather of much weight ; and it is probably true, as a very acute though very unfriendly modern critic of his has declared, that he has "published more errors of carelessness than any other writer on the history of New England."¹

Though the fame of the "*Magnalia*" overshadows that

¹ James Savage, in J. Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." II. 28, note.

of all the other writings produced by its author, it was the book of a young man—if, indeed, we are permitted to suppose that Cotton Mather ever was a young man. Of the books he wrote after that, and especially in his later years, several are more readable, and perhaps also more valuable, than the work on which his literary renown principally rests.

One of these is "Bonifacius, An Essay upon the Good that is to be Devised and Designed, with Proposals of unexceptionable Methods to do Good in the World:"—a book quite remarkable for the clear ingenuity and the fascinating power with which it reduces charity to an exact science, and plans the systematic transaction of good deeds on business principles; a book to which Benjamin Franklin,¹ in his old age, paid the highest tribute—saying, that it had largely directed his conduct through life, and had done much to make him a useful citizen of the world; a book which holds the germs and hints of nearly all those vast organizations of benevolence that have been the glory of the years since it was written.

Upon the great and agitating theme of psalmody in his time, Cotton Mather obviously needed to be heard; and in 1718, he expressed himself on the subject, with his usual explicitness, in "Psalterium Americanum," which is simply "The Book of Psalms" translated from the Hebrew into English blank-verse. In his introduction to the work, he laments that in all the many versions of the Psalms before his own, "those rich things which the Holy Spirit of God speaks in the original Hebrew," are confounded with the rubbish of human inventions, and all this "merely for the sake of preserving the clink of the rhyme, which after all is of small consequence unto a generous poem, and of none at all unto the melody of singing,—but of how little, then, in singing unto the Lord."²

Probably the most vigorous and entertaining book that

¹ Works, X. 83.

² Introd. vii.

he ever wrote, is one that is also the most characteristic expression of his later mental development, "*Manuductio ad Ministerium*,"—a manual of "directions for a candidate of the ministry," published at Boston in 1726, only two years before the author's death. It describes, first, what the religious character of the candidate should be; secondly, what course he should take for his intellectual improvement; and, thirdly, what should be his "conduct after his appearance in the world,"—all intended to make him "a skilful and useful minister of the gospel." The book is written heartily, with real enthusiasm for the subject, and with greater directness and simplicity of style than the author has shown in any other work. Of course, being written by Cotton Mather, it is ostentatious of his vast reading and of his heroic grasp of all studies; it is, also, in some measure, an index to the state of literature, of science, of criticism, of general culture, in New England at that time; and, in many places, it is positively sprightly and amusing.

As would be expected, he draws out a generous scheme of study for his clerical protégé; summons him to make all knowledge tributary to his splendid vocation; bids him scorn the shallow and ignorant notions of professional attainment then spreading in New England. He urges him, for instance, to become a master of Hebrew; although that language "is fallen under so much disrepute as to make a learned man almost afraid of owning that he has anything of it, lest it should bring him under the suspicion of being an odd, starved, lank sort of a thing, who had lived only on Hebrew roots all his days."¹

He urges upon the young minister the need of mastering the lessons of history, and yet to be on his guard against the falsehoods of history—a theme on which Cotton Mather had an uncommon right to speak: "The instances wherein false history has been imposed upon the

¹ "*Manuductio*," etc. 30.

world are what cannot be numbered. Historians have generally taken after their father, Herodotus; . . . though they have not all of them always been such mercenary villains . . . as that scandalous fellow, who . . . hired himself out as an history-writer for the highest bidder. . . . Yea, there are historians of whom one can scarcely tell, which to admire most, the nature of their lies, or their manner of telling them—I mean, the impudence with which they tell them. . . . Be sure, the late historians that pretend unto an History of England, . . . write with such flagrant partialities, and are such evident leasing-makers, . . . that one may as well believe the ‘True History’ of a Lucian, as yield any credit unto them. . . . Indeed, the historians never keep closer to the way of lying, than in the relation they give of those twenty years which passed after the beginning of our Civil Wars. . . . Among these, the romance that goes under the title of ‘The History of the Grand Rebellion,’ and is fathered on the Earl of Clarendon, I would have you more particularly treat with the disregard that is proper for it.”¹

In directing his pupil to the study of natural philosophy, he passes into a satirical denunciation of Aristotle: “When I said natural philosophy, you may be sure I did not mean the Peripatetic. . . . It is, indeed, amazing to see the fate of the writings which go under the name of Aristotle. First, falling into the hands of those who could not read them, and yet for the sake of the famous author were willing to keep them, they were for a long while hid under ground, where many of them deserved a lodging. And from this place of darkness, the torn and worn manuscripts were anon fetched out, and imperfectly and unfaithfully enough transcribed, and conveyed from Athens to Rome. . . . The Saracens by and by got them. . . . When learning revived under Charlemagne, all Europe turned Aristotelian; yea, in some universities they swore allegiance to

¹ “*Manuductio*,” etc. 60–63.

him; and, O monstrous! if I am not misinformed, they do, in some universities at this day, foolishly and profanely on their knees continue to do so. With the vile person that made himself the head of the Church at Rome, this muddy-headed pagan divided the empire over the Christian world; but extended his empire further than he, or even Tamerlane. The very Jews themselves became his vassals. . . . And though Europe has, with fierce and long struggles about it, begun to shake off the shackles, he does to this day . . . continue to tyrannize over human understanding in a great part of the oriental world. No mortal else ever had such a prerogative to govern mankind as this philosopher, who, after the prodigious cartloads of stuff that has been written to explain him, . . . he yet remains in many . . . things sufficiently unintelligible, and forever in almost all things unprofitable. Avicen, after he had read his *Metaphysics* forty times over, and had them all by heart, was forced after all to lay them aside in despair of ever understanding them."¹

In this fatherly talk of an elderly prophet with one of his professional sons, he does not always succeed in keeping upon the level of ordinary discourse, but occasionally ascends to the grand style that is most natural to him; as when he imparts to the youth this consoling assurance: "I will not now suppose a quinquarticular controversy, but rather propose a ternaticular period of all controversies."²

The true place of Cotton Mather in our literary history is indicated when we say, that he was in prose writing, exactly what Nicholas Noyes was in poetry,—the last, the most vigorous, and, therefore, the most disagreeable representative of the Fantastic school in literature; and that, like Nicholas Noyes, he prolonged in New England the methods of that school even after his most cultivated contemporaries there had outgrown them, and had

¹ "Manuductio," etc. 47-49.

² *Ibid.* 119.

come to dislike them. The expulsion of the beautiful from thought, from sentiment, from language; a lawless and a merciless fury for the odd, the disorderly, the grotesque, the violent; strained analogies, unexpected images, pedantries, indelicacies, freaks of allusion, monstrosities of phrase;—these are the traits of Cotton Mather's writing, even as they are the traits common to that perverse and detestable literary mood that held sway in different countries of Christendom during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its birthplace was Italy; New England was its grave; Cotton Mather was its last great apostle.

His writings, in fact, are an immense reservoir of examples in Fantastic prose. Their most salient characteristic is pedantry,—a pedantry that is gigantic, stark, untempered, rejoicing in itself, unconscious of shame, filling all space in his books like an atmosphere. The mind of Cotton Mather was so possessed by the books he had read, that his most common thought had to force its way into utterance through dense hedges and jungles of quotation. Not only every sentence, but nearly every clause, pivots itself on some learned allusion; and by inveterate habit he had come to consider all subjects, not directly, but in their reflections and echoes in books. It is quite evident, too, that, just as the poet often shapes his idea to his rhymes and is helped to an idea by his rhyme, so Mather's mind acquired the knack of steering his thought so as to take in his quotation, from which in turn, perhaps, he reaped another thought.

That his manner of writing outlived the liking of his contemporaries, especially his later contemporaries, is plain. The best of them,—Jeremiah Dummer, Benjamin Colman, John Barnard, Mather Byles, Charles Chauncey, Jonathan Mayhew, rejected his style, and formed themselves, instead, upon the temperate and tasteful prose that had already come into use in England; while, even by his most devoted admirers, the vices of his literary expression were acknowledged. Thomas Prince, for example, gently said

of him: "In his style he was something singular, and not so agreeable to the gust of the age."¹ Even his own son, Samuel Mather, regretted his fault of "straining for far-fetched and dear-bought hints."²

But Cotton Mather had not formed his style by accident, nor was he without a philosophy to justify it. In early life he described his compositions as ornamented "by the multiplied references to other and former concerns, closely couched, for the observation of the attentive, in almost every paragraph;" and declared that this was "the best way of writing."³ And in his old age, nettled by the many sarcastic criticisms that were made upon his style by presumptuous persons even in his own city, he resumed the subject; and in a simple and trenchant passage, of real worth not only for itself but for its bearing upon the literary spirit of the period, he proudly defended his own literary manner, and even retorted criticism upon the literary manner of his assailants: "There has been a deal of ado about a style. . . . There is a way of writing, wherein the author endeavors that the reader may have something to the purpose in every paragraph. There is not only a vigor sensible in every sentence, but the paragraph is embellished with profitable references, even to something beyond what is directly spoken. Formal and painful quotations are not studied; yet all that could be learned from them is insinuated. The writer pretends not unto reading, yet he could not have writ as he does if he had not read very much in his time; and his composures are not only a cloth of gold, but also stuck with as many jewels as the gown of a Russian ambassador. This way of writing has been decried by many, and is at this day more than ever so, for the same reason that in the old story the grapes were decried, 'That they were not ripe.' A lazy, ignorant, conceited set of authors would

¹ Sermon on Death of Cotton Mather, 24.

² S. Mather, "Life of C. Mather," 69.

³ "Magnalia," I. 31.

persuade the whole tribe to lay aside that way of writing, for the same reason that one would have persuaded his brethren to part with the encumbrance of their bushy tails. But, however fashion and humor may prevail, they must not think that the club at their coffee-house is all the world. But there will always be those who will in this case be governed by indisputable reason, and who will think that the real excellency of a book will never lie in saying of little; that the less one has for his money in a book, 'tis really the more valuable for it; and that the less one is instructed in a book, and the more of superfluous margin and superficial harangue, and the less of substantial matter one has in it, the more 'tis to be accounted of. And if a more massy way of writing be never so much disgusted at this day, a better gust will come on. . . . The blades that set up for critics, appear to me, for the most part, as contemptible as they are a supercilious generation. . . . Nor can you easily find any one thing wherein they agree for their style, except perhaps a perpetual care to give us jejune and empty pages. . . . There is much talk of a florid style obtaining among the pens that are most in vogue; but how often would it puzzle one, even with the best glasses, to find the flowers. . . . After all, every man will have his own style, which will distinguish him as much as his gait."¹

IV.

SAMUEL MATHER, the son of Cotton Mather, was born in 1706; was graduated at Harvard College in 1723; and in 1732, became one of the pastors of the church in the service of which his father and his grandfather had spent their lives. In 1741, in consequence of disaffection in that church, he led off a portion of it, and formed a new church, of which he continued to be the pastor until his

¹ "Manuductio," etc. 44-46.

death, in 1785. In him, evidently, the ancestral fire had become almost extinct. He had abundant learning; was extremely industrious; published many things—discourses, a biography of his father, theological and historical treatises, even a poem; but there was not in them, as there was not in him, the victorious energy of an original mind, or even the winning felicity of an imitative one. In the strifes of the Revolution his course was both patriotic and bitter: he differed from some of his kindred, by taking the side of the colonies against the king; he disinherited his only son for loyalty to the Crown; he described his loyalist brother-in-law, Governor Thomas Hutchinson, as a “misguided and avaricious” man, and as “doomed to perpetual infamy;” and the whole “body of Tories and Refugees,” he denounced, in the language of William Pitt, as “the most infamous scoundrels on the face of the earth.”¹ He was a sturdy and a worthy man. He left no successor to continue the once-splendid dynasty of his tribe. He was the last, and the least, of the Mathers.

¹ S. G. Drake's Introd. to I. Mather's “Hist. of King Philip's War,” xviii.-xxii.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW ENGLAND : TOPICS OF POPULAR DISCUSSION.

- I.—Early literary prominence of the clergy—Growth of the laity in intellectual influence—The range of the people's thought and talk during the second colonial period.
- II.—The mournful reminiscences of Joshua Scottow—The witchcraft spasm—Robert Calef and "More Wonders of the Invisible World."
- III.—The diary in literature—Sarah Kemble Knight—Her "Journal"—Pictures of travel and of rustic manners early in the eighteenth century.
- IV.—Samuel Sewall—His brave life—The man—His attitude toward witchcraft and slavery.—His "Selling of Joseph"—Among the prophets—"A Description of the New Heaven"—The New Jerusalem to be in America—A gallant champion of the immortality of the souls of women.
- V.—John Wise—His inadequate fame—His genius as a writer—His career as preacher, muscular Christian, and opponent of despotism—The first great American expounder of democracy in church and state—His victorious assault upon a scheme for clerical aggrandizement—"The Churches' Charrel Expoused"—The logic, wit, and eloquence of the book—His "Vindication of the Government of New England Churches"—Analysis of the book—Traits of his mind and style.
- VI.—Jeremiah Dummer—His early fame—Short career as a preacher—Goes to London and becomes courtier, barrister, and colonial agent—A faithful American always—His "Letter to a Noble Lord"—His "Defence of the New England Charters"—The elegance and strength of his style.
- VII.—The almanac in modern literature—Its early prominence in America—Its function—Wit and wisdom in almanacs not originated by Franklin—Nathaniel Ames, the greatest of our colonial almanac-makers—His "Astronomical Diary and Almanac," an annual miscellany of information and amusement—Its great popularity and utility—Its predictions—Its shrewd and earnest appeals to the common mind—Its suggestions concerning health—Its original verses—Predicts the Day of Judgment—A noble prophecy of universal peace—Vision of the coming greatness of America—A friendly address to posterity.

I.

IN the history of literature in New England during the colonial time, one fact stands out above all others,—the

intellectual leadership of the clergy, and that, too, among a laity neither ignorant nor weak. This leadership was in every sense honorable, both for the leaders and the led. It was not due alone to the high authority of the clerical office in New England; it was due still more to the personal greatness of the men who filled that office, and who themselves made the office great. They were intellectual leaders because they deserved to be; for, living among a well-educated and high-spirited people, they knew more, were wiser, were abler, than all other persons in the community. Of such a leadership, it was an honor even to be among the followers. And in our record of the literary achievements of New England in the colonial time, the clergy fill by far the largest space, because, in all departments of writing, they did by far the largest amount of work.

After the first half century of New England life, another fact comes into notice,—the advance of the laity in literary activity. By that time, many strong and good men, who had been educated there in all the learning of the age, either not entering the clerical profession or not remaining in it, began to organize and to develop the other learned professions—the legal, medical, and tuitionary—and, appealing to the public through various forms of literature, to divide more and more with the clergy the leadership of men's minds. Moreover, in the last decade of the seventeenth century, an attempt was made to establish a newspaper in New England. The attempt failed. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, another attempt was made, and did not fail; and long before the end of our colonial epoch, a new profession had come into existence, having a power to act on the minds of men more mightily than any other,—the profession of journalism.

Thus, as public discussion grew in the number of those who were participators in it, so also did it increase in the variety of its methods, and in the range of its themes. Henceforward we may trace the intellectual life of New

England, not merely in sermons, in formal theological treatises, in grave narratives of civil and military experience, in sombre and painful religious poetry, but likewise in compact literary essays, in pamphlets sprightly or brutal or stupid, in satires, in almanacs, in popular songs, in editorial articles. Public discussion became secularized. At last, even this world began to receive some attention, and to be written about. Witchcraft, state-craft, the small-pox, the behavior of the royal governors, the words and deeds of preachers, quarrels of churches, quarrels of towns and of colonies, agriculture, the currency, repudiation, manufactures, the training of soldiers, the founding of colleges, Whitefield, religious mania, dress, drunkenness, wars with the Indians, wars with the French, earthquakes, comets, the new wonders of science, the impiety of averting lightning by the "electrical points," the truth of Christianity, the damnation of infants, the right to think, the conquest of Canada, the consolidation of the English colonies in America, the grand future of the American continent, the virtues of the English kings, the love and loyalty of America for England,—these were some of the subjects that, year by year, along our second colonial period, possessed the thoughts of men and women in New England, and found some sort of utterance in literature.

II.

In 1691, a thrifty old merchant of Boston, Joshua Scot-tow,¹ who had grown up with the colony almost from the beginning, published a little book of senile lamentations over the degeneracy of the age. It was called "Old Men's Tears for their own Declensions."² Encouraged by this

¹ Born probably 1615, died 1698. Sketch of him in 2 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. IV. 100-104.

² A second edition was published in 1749, but without the best part of it, the "Address to the Reader."

stroke at authorship, he gave to the press, three years afterward, "A Narrative of the Planting of the Massachusetts Colony,"¹ beginning with 1628, and particularly accenting the fact of "the Lord's signal presence the first thirty years." Both books have some historical and psychological value, but as literature are worthless. His method of expression is spasmodic, ecstatic, full of apocalyptic symbols, cant, forced allusions, and the croakings of decrepitude. In the dedication of his second book to Simon Bradstreet, he had the good sense to anticipate that his writings might be pronounced "the delirious dotage of his puerile and superannuated brains."

The paroxysms of terror and of frenzy into which, during the last decade of the seventeenth century, multitudes of people in New England were thrown by the witchcraft excitement, gave birth to numerous publications, chiefly hortatory, minatory, and inflammatory; and to one publication that was at least rational, "More Wonders of the Invisible World," published in London in 1700, and written by a merchant of Boston, Robert Calef, then forty-eight years of age.² Though the book is quite destitute of literary expertness; is without symmetry in substance or felicity in form; is, indeed, a hodge-pudding of facts, hints, queries, and conjectures; it is not destitute of expertness of other kinds,—particularly that kind of expertness which, in a time of general enravishment, may enable one cool head to be an antidote to a multitude of hot ones. It is a reservoir of weird psychological phenomena, first frankly described in the credulous speech of the brotherhood and sisterhood of victims, then chilled and taken to pieces by a process of Sadducean counter-evidence and cross-examination. It is, also, a monument of the moral courage and the intellectual poise of its author; of his firm, placid tenacity in demanding some real evi-

¹ Reprinted in 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. IV. 279-330.

² N. E. Hist. and Gen. Reg. XXX. 461.

dence as the price of his belief ; of his obstinate incredulity to the end ; all this in contrast with the intolerant eagerness of his contemporaries to rush headlong into folly ; their hectic mental spasms ; and their appetency—at once voracious and ferocious—for marvels, born in malice or in madness, and ending in infamy and in death. For the chief clerical leaders in the witchcraft excitement, especially the two Mathers, this book, both by its scepticism and by its personal irreverence, was most exasperating. The younger of these two divines wreaked his rage upon the book by calling it “ a firebrand thrown by a madman ; ”¹ and the elder of them, at that time president of Harvard College, tried to extinguish the book by having it publicly burned in the college-yard. But its peculiar power could not be stifled in a hangman's smudge ; and one may truly say of it, that it went far to unmadden a whole population of devout and learned lunatics.

III.

There is one form of writing—the diary—that costs little to produce ; that is usually valued at little by its producers ; but that often gathers incalculable worth with time, outlives many laborious and ambitious literary monuments, and becomes a storehouse of treasures for historians, poets, and painters. It cannot be said that our ancestors failed to write diaries. Unluckily, however, the diaries that they wrote in great abundance, were generally records of events which took place only inside of them ; psychological diaries, more or less mystical and unhealthy ; chronicles of tender, scrupulous, introverted natures, misled into gratuitous self-torture ; narratives of their own spiritual moods fluctuating hour by hour, of the visitations of Satan, of dulness or of ecstasy in prayer, of doubts or hopes respecting their share in the divine decrees ; itiner-

¹ C. Mather, “ Some Few Remarks upon a Scandalous Book,” 5.

aries of daily religious progress, aggravated by overwork, indigestion, and a gospel of gloom.

There has come down to us, however, from our second literary period, one specimen of the diary, which, though crude enough in texture, is refreshingly carnal, external, and healthy. It is "The Journal" kept by Mistress Sarah Kemble Knight, a dame of Boston—buxom, blithe, and debonair—who in October, 1704, being then thirty-eight years of age, a wife and a mother, travelled on horseback from Boston through Rhode Island and southern Connecticut to New Haven, a journey of five days; thence, in December, to New York, a journey of two days; returning home by the same route, and reaching Boston in March, 1705. In the pauses of her journey each day, she carefully jotted down her adventures and her own comments upon them, doing this with no little sprightliness and graphic power. The roads were rough, often uncertain; the crossings of the rivers were perilous; the inns were abominable; the manners of the people churlish, their speech a jargon of disgusting slang. Her "Journal," published for the first time in 1825,¹ is an amusing little book, and has special value as a realistic picture of rural manners in New York and New England in the first decade of the eighteenth century. She had no companions upon her expedition, except as she hired them or fell in with them by the way; and she bore the annoyances of the journey with a sort of mocking and recalcitrant resignation, which was only saved from going to pieces altogether by help of an eye quick to see the ludicrous aspects of disagreeable things—particularly as soon as they were past. Her note-book, indeed, was a sovereign safety-valve to her, forming a harmless conduit through which she could pour her hourly vexations, in playful little puffs of prose and verse. Thus, having to cross a certain river, and not daring to do so by

¹ Edited by Theodore Dwight. Reprinted, with new preface and additional information about her, Albany, 1865.

fording it on horseback, she went over it in a wretched canoe—a far less safe ferry-boat than her horse would have been. “The canoe was very small and shallow, so that when we were in,” it “seemed ready to take in water, which greatly terrified me, and caused me to be very circumspect, sitting with my hands fast on each side, my eyes steady, not daring so much as to lodge my tongue a hair’s breadth more on one side of my mouth than t’other, nor so much as think on Lot’s wife; for a wry thought would have overset our wherry.”¹ On another day, as she relates, the road was furnished even worse than usual “with accommodations for travellers, so that we were forced to ride twenty-two miles by the post’s account, but nearer thirty by mine, before we could bait so much as our horses, which I exceedingly complained of. But the post encouraged me by saying we should be well accommodated anon at Mr. Devil’s, a few miles further; but I questioned whether we ought to go to the Devil to be helped out of affliction. However, like the rest of deluded souls that post to the infernal den, we made all possible speed to this Devil’s habitation; where, alighting in full assurance of good accommodation, we were going in; but meeting his two daughters, (as I supposed, twins—they so nearly resembled each other, both in features and habit, and looked as old as the Devil himself, and quite as ugly,) we desired entertainment, but could hardly get a word out of them, till with our importunity . . . they called the old sophister; who was as sparing of his words as his daughters had been. . . . He differed only in this from the old fellow in t’other country—he let us depart. However, I thought it proper to warn poor travellers to endeavor to avoid falling into circumstances like ours, which at our next stage I sat down and did, as followeth:

May all that dread the cruel Fiend of Night
Keep on, and not at this curst mansion light.

¹ “Journal” 15-16.

'Tis hell ; 'tis hell ; and Devils here do dwell ;
Here dwells the Devil—surely this is hell.
Nothing but wants—a drop to cool your tongue
Can't be procured these cruel fiends among.
Plenty of horrid grins, and looks severe,
Hunger and thirst ; but pity's banished here.
The right hand keep, if hell on earth you fear !"¹

IV.

A strong, gentle, and great man was Samuel Sewall, great by almost every measure of greatness,—moral courage, honor, benevolence, learning, eloquence, intellectual force and breadth and brightness. Both his father and his grandfather were among the pioneers of New England colonization ; although his father, who founded the town of Newbury, Massachusetts, seems to have passed and repassed between England and America without bringing hither his wife and children, until 1661, when the boy, Samuel, was nine years old. This boy, destined to great usefulness and distinction in the new world, thus came to it in time to have that personal shaping for his life here, only to be got from early and direct contact with it. He had the usual education of a New England gentleman in those days. He was graduated at Harvard College. He tried his hand for a time at preaching,—a vocation for which he was well qualified, but from which he was diverted into a prosperous and benign secular career. He became a member of the board of assistants, then of the council, judge of the supreme court, and finally its chief-justice, holding the latter office until 1728, two years after which date he died. He was a man built, every way, after a large pattern. By his great wealth, his great offices, his learning, his strong sense, his wit, his warm human sympathy, his fearlessness, his magnanimity, he was a visible potentate among men in those days.

¹ " Journal," 25-26.

"Stately and slow, with thoughtful air,
His black cap hiding his whitened hair,
Walks the Judge of the great Assize,
Samuel Sewall, the good and wise.
His face with lines of firmness wrought,
He wears the look of a man unbought,
Who swears to his hurt and changes not;
Yet touched and softened nevertheless
With the grace of Christian gentleness;
The face that a child would climb to kiss;
True and tender and brave and just,
That man might honor and woman trust."¹

He had the courage to rebuke the faults of other people; he had the still greater courage to confess his own. Having, in 1692, fallen into the witchcraft snare, and having from the bench joined in the sentence of condemnation upon the witches, five years later—when more light had broken into his mind—he made in church a public confession of his error and of his sorrow. The Indians of Massachusetts had then no wiser or more generous friend than he; and he was, perhaps, the first of Americans to see and renounce and denounce the crime of negro slavery as then practised in New England. In 1700, he spoke out plainly on this subject, publishing a tract named "The Selling of Joseph;"² an acute, compact, powerful statement of the case against American slavery, leaving, indeed, almost nothing new to be said a century and a half afterward, when the sad thing came up for final adjustment. In this pamphlet one sees traces both of his theological and his legal studies; it is a lawyer's brief, fortified by Scriptural texts, and illuminated by lofty ethical intuitions. Within those three pages he has left some strong and great words—immortal and immutable aphorisms of equity: "Liberty is in real value next unto life; none

¹ J. G. Whittier, "Prophecy of Samuel Sewall." Works, II. 141.

² First printed in a folio of three pages, at Boston, 1700. Reprinted in Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc. for 1863-1864. 161-165. I quote from the reprint.

ought to part with it themselves or deprive others of it, but upon most mature consideration."¹ "All men, as they are the sons of Adam, are co-heirs, and have equal right unto liberty, and all other outward comforts of life."² "Originally and naturally there is no such thing as slavery."³ "There is no proportion between twenty pieces of silver and liberty."⁴

All his lifetime he made the Biblical prophecies his favorite study,—a study out of which all manner of marvels, not always edifying, may be educed upon occasion; and the special marvel drawn from them by this sagacious Puritan judge was their palpable predictions of America as the final "rendezvous for Gog and Magog," and as the true seat of the New Jerusalem. In his "*Phaenomena Quaedam Apocalyptica; . . . or . . . a Description of the New Heaven as it makes to those who stand upon the New Earth*," a book first published in 1697,⁵ he unfolds this theory, going over the applicable prophecies clause by clause. Toward the end of his book, he replies to the objections that might be urged against his doctrine,—one of them being that in America the human race inevitably deteriorates, becomes barren, dies off early. The accusation he repels with an affluence of facts illustrating the productiveness and longevity of the human family here; and having done so, he rises into this rhythmical and triumphant passage, which in its quaint melody of learned phrase, and in a gentle humor that lurks and loses itself in the stiff folds of his own solemnity, has a suggestion of the quality of Sir Thomas Browne: "As long as Plum Island shall faithfully keep the commanded post, notwithstanding all the hectoring words and hard blows of the proud and boisterous ocean; as long as any salmon or sturgeon shall swim in the streams of Merrimac, or any perch or pickerel in Crane Pond; as long as the sea-fowl

¹ "The Selling of Joseph," 161.

⁴ Ibid. 162.

² Ibid. 161.

³ Ibid. 162.

⁵ Reprinted, Boston, 1727.

shall know the time of their coming, and not neglect seasonably to visit the places of their acquaintance; as long as any cattle shall be fed with the grass growing in the meadows, which do humbly bow down themselves before Turkey-Hill; as long as any sheep shall walk upon Old-Town Hills, and shall from thence pleasantly look down upon the River Parker, and the fruitful marshes lying beneath; as long as any free and harmless doves shall find a white oak or other tree within the township, to perch, or feed, or build a careless nest upon, and shall voluntarily present themselves to perform the office of gleaners after barley-harvest; as long as Nature shall not grow old and dote, but shall constantly remember to give the rows of Indian corn their education by pairs; so long shall Christians be born there, and being first made meet, shall from thence be translated to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."¹

It gives still another charm to the memory of this practical and hard-headed mystic of New England, this wide-souled and speculative

"Puritan,
Who the halting step of his age outran,"

to discover, that, in a matter of very serious concern, he had the chivalry to come forward as the champion of woman. He tells us that once, while "waiting upon a dear child in her last sickness," he took up a book to read. It was a book called "The British Apollo." Presently, his eye fell upon a startling question, worded thus: "Is there now, or will there be at the resurrection, any females in heaven; since there seems to be no need of them there?"

¹ "Phaenomena," etc. 63. The reader will recall the use of this passage made by Whittier in his delightful poem, "The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall." The old Puritan's prose in this case is more poetic than the poet's metrical paraphrase of it. Whittier speaks of Newbury as Sewall's "native town;" but Sewall was born at Horton, England. He also describes Sewall as an "old man," "propped on his staff of age" when he made this prophecy; but Sewall was then forty-five years old.

Very likely he then closed the book; and there, by the death-bed of his daughter, over whose resurrection this question threw its cold shadow, his mind set to work upon the problem thus presented; and afterward he fully resolved it, in an essay bearing this delectable title: "Talitha Cumi; or, An Invitation to Women to look after their Inheritance in the Heavenly Mansions." He begins by quoting the question that he had met with; then he proceeds to say: "This malapert question had not patience to stay for an answer, as appears by the conclusion of it—'since there seems to be no need of them there.' 'Tis most certain there will be no needless, impertinent persons or things in heaven. Heaven is a roomy, a most magnificent palace, furnished with the most rich and splendid entertainments; and the noblest guests are invited to partake of them. But why should there seem to be no need of women in heaven? . . . To speak the truth, God has no need of any creature. His name is exalted far above all blessing and praise. But by the same argument there will be no angels nor men in heaven, because there is no need of them there." He then discusses, with judge-like care and fulness, all the arguments, on both sides, that may be drawn from reason, Scripture, and the ancient and modern theologians, reaching at last this assertion: "There are three women that shall rise again,—Eve, the mother of all living; Sarah, the mother of the faithful; and Mary, the mother of our Lord. And if these three rise again, without doubt all will." In the course of the discussion he meets the objection that, upon a certain branch of his subject, "the ancients are divided in their opinions." His answer to this objection comes edged by a flash of wit: "If we should wait till all the ancients are agreed in their opinions, neither men nor women would ever get to heaven."¹

¹ Selections from Sewall MSS. Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc. for 1873, 380-384. Other published writings of Sewall's are "Answer to Queries respecting

V.

When Chaucer visited the house of the goddess Fame,
he observed that the outer gate

“so well y-corven was,
That never suche another nas;
And yit it was be aventure
Ywrought, as often as be cure.”¹

It is an illustration of the caprice which everywhere prevails in the domain of this goddess, that the one American who, upon the whole, was the most powerful and brilliant prose-writer produced in this country during the colonial time, and who in his day enjoyed a sovereign reputation in New England, should have passed since then into utter obscurity; while several of his contemporaries, particularly Increase and Cotton Mather, who were far inferior to him in genius, have names that are still resounding in our memories. This writer was John Wise, born at Roxbury, probably in 1652; graduated at Harvard College in 1673; and, from 1680 until his death in 1725, minister of the Second Church of Ipswich. He had almost every quality that gives distinction among men. He was of towering height, of great muscular power, stately and graceful in shape and movement; in his advancing years, of an aspect most venerable. His parishioners long remembered with pride how a certain famous and blustering hero from Andover, the mighty wrestler of all that region, once came down to Ipswich for the purpose of challenging their stalwart parson to a friendly trial of strength at wrestling; and how the parson, after much solicitation,

America,” 1690; “Proposals Touching Accomplishment of Prophecies,” 1713. Voluminous manuscripts of his, including his diary for about forty years, are now in possession of the Mass. Hist. Soc., and are rich materials for the illustration of those times.

¹ Works of Chaucer, Aldine ed. V. 248.

at last reluctantly consented, but had scarcely wrapped his arms in iron hug around his antagonist, when the latter lay outstretched upon the earth, with his curiosity respecting the Reverend Mr. Wise completely satisfied.

The soul of this man was of the same large and indomitable make. He had a robust joy in nature and in human nature; the creed of a democrat, without fear and without truculence: to him the griefs of the oppressed and the aggressions of the oppressor were alike insupportable. In 1687, when Sir Edmund Andros sent down to Ipswich his lawless order for a province-tax, the young parson braved the tyrant's anger, by advising his people not to comply with that order; for which he was arrested, tried, deposed from the ministry, fined, and thrown into prison. In 1689, when Sir Edmund was overthrown, John Wise was back again in his parish; and, both there and in Boston, he was at the front among the bravest, who then sought to prevent the recurrence of such despotism, by making examples of the petty English despot and of his still pettier American accomplices. In 1690, when the new governor of Massachusetts, Sir William Phips, led an expedition against Canada, John Wise, by request of the colonial legislature, accompanied him as chaplain, distinguishing himself in the campaign by feats of heroism, endurance, and military skill, as well as by fidelity in preaching and praying.

Thus far in his life, he had been noted chiefly for traits of physical and moral greatness, a devout, benignant, valiant, and blameless manhood; but within a few years afterward, there came upon the country an event that made him famous for the exertion of intellectual powers, both in thought and speech, the most rugged, versatile, and splendid.

In the year 1705, on the fifth of November—ominous day!—there was issued at Boston a very shrewd document, without any signature attached, but purporting to have been framed by an association of ministers in and

near that city. It was addressed to the churches and ministers of New England. It bore the unassuming title of "Question and Proposals." Masked under deferential and harmless phrases, it was really a project for taking away the power of the laity in all the churches of New England, for annulling the independence of each church, and for substituting in place of both the will of the clergy. The document was understood to have been the work of the two Mathers, backed by a coterie of clerical admirers, and representing an inclination widely cherished, even if concealed. The document had a meek look, innocuous, even holy; it sought only the glory of God and the good of man; it was not loud, peremptory, dogmatic; it only asked and suggested. But John Wise, from his rural study in Ipswich, saw its true character,—a plot for an ecclesiastical revolution, and a revolution backward; and having given ample time for the scheme to work its way into general discussion, at last he lifted up his hand, and, at one blow, crushed it. His blow was a book, "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused," published at Boston in 1710,—a book that by its learning, logic, sarcasm, humor, invective, its consuming earnestness, its vision of great truths, its flashes of triumphant eloquence, simply annihilated the scheme which it assailed.

His introduction is planned with exceeding art to conciliate the reader, to rouse the suspicion of the public against the men who had proposed the revolutionary scheme, and to confirm the popular conviction that the order of church-government already established, had upon the whole worked satisfactorily: "The scheme seems to be the spectre . . . of Presbyterianism; . . . yet if I don't mistake, in intention there is something considerable of Prelacy in it. . . . There is also something in it which smells very strong of the infallible chair. . . . For the clergy to monopolize both the legislative and executive part of canon law, is but a few steps from the chair of universal pestilence; and by the ladder here set up, clergymen may,

if they please, clamber thus high. . . . Who can limit their power, or shorten their arm in their executions? Their Bulls can now, upon any affront, bellow and thunder out a thousand terrible curses; and the poor affrighted and envassaled laity . . . must forfeit their salvation, if they don't tamely submit."¹

He then takes up, one by one, the several proposals; and exposes the danger and folly of each, with great power of logic, humor, and sarcasm. Thus, in commenting upon the proposed mode of receiving candidates into the ministry, he argues that it will surely lead to the evils of clerical corruption seen elsewhere: "How oft is it repeated that poor, sordid, debauched wretches are put into holy orders, whenas they were fitter to be put into the stocks, or sent to Bridewell for madmen, than to be sent with their testimonials to work in Christ's vineyard! How long have the Indies, the seas, the provinces, and many other parts of the empire, groaned under this damnable way of cheating God of his glory and the world of salvation!"²

It was, however, objected that under the present system, candidates often got into the ministry too young. He replies: "What then? . . . If Christ be preached, all is well. . . . Despise not the day of small things. All men must have a beginning, and every bird which is pretty well fledged must begin to fly. And ours are not of the nest where Icarus was hatched, whose feathers were only glued on; but these belong to the angelic host, and their wings grow out from their essence; therefore, you may allow them with the lark now and then to dart heavenward, though the shell or down be scarce off from their heads."³

It was urged, likewise, that the scheme has quite a harmless look; and in reply, he shows that, in spite of that, it involves the possibility of great expansion into mischief: "Though it be but a calf now, yet in time it may grow—

¹ "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused," 38-39.

² *Ibid.* 65.

³ *Ibid.* 66.

being of a thrifty nature—to become a sturdy ox that will know no ‘whoa,’ and, it may be, past the churches’ skill then to subdue it. For if I am not much mistaken, . . . that great and terrible Beast with seven heads and ten horns . . . was nothing else, a few ages ago, but just such another calf as this is. It was, indeed, finely shaped and of neat limbs, . . . insomuch that the great potentates of the earth were much ravished with its aspect and features; some offered to suckle it on the choicest cows amongst all the herds of royal cattle, . . . hoping to stock their own countries with the breed; and when it was grown to a considerable magnitude, to render it more shapely and fair, they put iron tips on to its horns, and beset its stupendous bulk with very rich ornaments. . . . But alas, poor men! they have paid dear for their prodigality and fondness; for this very Creature, that was but a calf when they first begun to feed it, is now grown to be such a mad, furious, and wild Bull, that there is scarce a Christian monarch on earth . . . —the best horseman or huntsman of them all—that dare take this Beast by the horns, when he begins to bounce and bellow. Indeed the Emperor, within these few years, has recovered so much courage that he took him by the tail, to drive him out of his royal granges, being quite angry and weary with his cropping and browsing on the flowers of his imperial crown. But, otherwise, the Beast generally goes at large, and does what he will in all princes’ dominions, and keeps them in awe. Therefore, to conclude, . . . ‘Obsta principiis!’ It is wisdom to nip such growths in the bud, and keep down by early slaughter such a breed of cattle.”¹

The document that he is exposing, is dated “November the fifth.” He does not let this incident slip; and having, with wonderful effectiveness, developed his argument that the scheme contained in that document is a treasonable conspiracy, he proceeds to give the authors of

¹ “The Churches’ Quarrel Espoused,” 81-82.

it a terrible thrust. Beginning with some "astrological remarks" upon the document, he says: "I find its nativity full of favorable aspects to English churches. The fifth day of November has been as a guardian angel to the most sacred interest of the empire; it has rescued the whole glory of church and state from the most fatal arrest of hell and Rome. . . . Had I been of the cabal . . . which formed these proposals, so soon as I had seen . . . the date, . . . I should have cried out, '*Miserere nostri Deus*,'—the good Lord have mercy upon us. This is the 'gun-powder-treason day;' and we are every man ruined, being running Fawkes's fate! Why, gentlemen, have you forgot it? It is the day of the gun-powder-treason, and a fatal day to traitors. . . . I have such an awe upon my mind of this very day, that I have made a settled resolution, that of all the days of the whole year, I will never conspire treason against my natural prince, nor mischief to the churches, on the fifth day of November. And so, farewell, gentlemen; for I dare not join with you in this conspiracy."¹ But again, in the discussion, he returns to this date, and he addresses to it a fervid and brilliant apostrophe: "Blessed! thrice blessed day! uphold and maintain thy matchless fame in the calendar of time; and let no darkness or shadow of death stain thee; let thy horizon comprehend whole constellations of favorable and auspicious stars, reflecting a benign influence on the English monarchy; and upon every return, in thy anniversary circuits, keep an indulgent eye open and wakeful upon all the beauties, from the throne to the footstool, of that mighty empire! And when it is thy misfortune to conceive a Monster, which may threaten any part of the nation's glory, let it come crippled from the womb, or else travail in birth again, with some noble hero or invincible Hercules, who may conquer and confound it."²

This noble passage is near the victorious close of the

¹ "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused," 82.

² *Ibid.* 114.

book; and having thus abundantly implied the infamous character of the conspiracy, he magnanimously tells the conspirators themselves that, for the present, and on their good behavior, they are safe; for he will not reveal their names: "Where the place was, or the persons who were present in this rendezvous, shall never be told by me, unless it be extorted by the rack. And though I have endeavored with freedom of argument to subvert the error, I will never stain their personal glory by repeating or calling over the muster-roll. Therefore, as Noah's sons cast a garment upon their father's nakedness, so . . . their names for me shall repose under a mantle of honorable pity and forgetfulness."¹

Upon the whole, this book has extraordinary literary merit. It is, of its kind, a work of art; it has a beginning, a middle, and an end,—each part in fit proportion, and all connected organically. The author is expert in exciting and in sustaining attention; does not presume upon the patience of his readers; relieves the heaviness and dryness of the argument by gayety and sarcasm; and has occasional bursts of grand enthusiasm, of majestic and soul-stirring eloquence. In tone it is superior to its time; keen and urgent in its reasoning, showing no pity for opposing principles, it is full of forbearance and even of urbanity for opposing persons. It is a piece of triumphant logic, brightened by wit, and ennobled by imagination; a master-specimen of the art of public controversy.

"The Churches' Quarrel Espoused" is an exposition of the theory of democracy, in the Christian church, but the argument is developed according to the exigencies of a special occasion. In 1717, seven years after the publication of that book, John Wise published a systematic treatise upon the same subject, expounding in a formal and didactic way the principles of ecclesiastical polity then adopted in New England. He entitled this work,

¹ "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused," 115.

"A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches."

His theory of the best government for the church derives its character from his fundamental ideas of what is the best government for the state; and the treatment of the latter subject leads him into a broad discussion of the rights of man, the nature of civil obligation, and the various forms of civil polity.

He first deals with man in his natural state, "as a free-born subject under the crown of Heaven, and owing homage to none but God himself. . . . He is the favorite animal on earth, in that this part of God's image, namely, reason, is congenerate with his nature, wherein by a law immutable, enstamped upon his frame, God has provided a rule for men in all their actions, obliging each one to the performance of that which is right, . . . the which is nothing but the dictate of right reason founded in the soul of man. . . . The second great immunity of man is an original liberty enstamped upon his rational nature. . . . I shall waive the consideration of man's moral turpitude, but shall view him" as "the most august animal in the world. . . . Whatever has happened since his creation, he remains at the upper-end of nature." Man's natural liberty consists in three things: first, man has "a faculty of doing or omitting things according to the direction of his judgment;" second, "every man must be conceived to be perfectly in his own power and disposal, and not to be controlled by the authority of any other;" third, there is "an equality amongst men, which is . . . to be cherished and preserved to the highest degree, as will consist with all just distinctions amongst men of honor, and shall be agreeable with the public good. For man has a high valuation of himself, and the passion seems to lay its first foundation, not in pride, but really in the high and admirable frame and constitution of human nature. . . . Since, then, human nature agrees equally with all persons, and since no one can live a sociable life with another that does

not own and respect him as a man, it follows as a command of the law of nature, that every man esteem and treat another as one who is naturally his equal, or who is a man as well as he. . . . The noblest mortal in his entrance on the stage of life is not distinguished by any pomp . . . from the lowest of mankind; and our life hastens to the same general mark. Death observes no ceremony, but knocks as loud at the barriers of the court as at the door of the cottage. . . . Nature having set all men upon a level and made them equals, no servitude or subjection can be conceived without inequality, and this cannot be made without usurpation in others, or voluntary compliance in those who resign their freedom and give away their degree of natural being."¹

In treating of man in a civil state, he shows that "the true and leading cause of forming governments and yielding up natural liberty, and throwing man's equality into a common pile . . . was . . . to guard themselves against the injuries men were liable to interchangeably; for none so good to man as man, and yet none a greater enemy. So that the first . . . original of civil power is the people. . . . The formal reason of government is the will of a community, yielded up and surrendered to some other subject, either of one particular person or more."² He, then, speaks of "the three forms of a regular state,"—democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy; and of the first he says: "This form of government appears in the greatest part of the world to have been the most ancient. . . . Reason seems to show it to be most probable that when men . . . had thoughts of joining in a civil body, they would without question be inclined to administer their common affairs by their common judgment, and so must necessarily . . . establish a democracy."³

Having thus spoken of each of these civil forms, he next deals with their analogous forms in church organiza-

¹ "A Vindication," etc. 32-43.

² Ibid. 43-44.

³ Ibid. 47.

tion. He begins with the ecclesiastical monarchy, and of course finds this embodied in the Papacy: "It is certain his Holiness, either by reasonable pleas or powerful cheats, has assumed an absolute and universal sovereignty; this fills his cathedral chair, and is adorned with a triple crown." His claim is that "the Almighty has made him both key-keeper of heaven and hell, with the adjacent territories of purgatory, and vested in him an absolute sovereignty over the Christian world. . . . He therefore decks himself with the spoils of the divine attributes, styling himself, Our Lord God, 'Optimum, maximum, et supremum numen in terris;' a God on earth, a visible Deity, and that his power is absolute, and his wisdom infallible. And many of the great potentates of the earth have paid their fealty as though it was really so. . . . He has placed his holy foot on the monarch's profane neck, as crushing a vermin crawling out of the stable of his sovereignty; and others very frequently kiss his toes with very profound devotion. . . . But the sad inquiry is, whether this sort of government has not plainly subverted the design of the gospel, and the end for which Christ's government was ordained, namely, the moral, spiritual, and eternal happiness of men. But I have no occasion to pursue this remark with tedious demonstrations. It is very plain; it is written with blood in capital letters, to be read at midnight by the flames of Smithfield and other such like consecrated fires,—that the government of this ecclesiastical monarch has, instead of sanctifying, absolutely debauched the world, and subverted all good Christianity in it. . . . Without the least show of any vain presumption, we may infer that God and wise Nature were never propitious to the birth of this Monster."¹

As regards the aristocratic form of church government, which he finds embodied in the Episcopacy, he thinks that Christianity "has been peeled, robbed, and spoiled" by it

¹ "Vindication," etc. 54-56.

—"so doleful a contemplation is it to think the world should be destroyed by those men who by God were ordained to save it."¹

He then comes to the ecclesiastical democracy, and of course advocates it, doing so with calm, rational, and powerful arguments: "This is a form of government which the light of nature does highly value, and often directs to, as most agreeable to the just and natural prerogatives of human beings."²

Throughout this entire work, the author shows abundant learning; but always he is the master of his learning, and not its victim. He lays out his propositions clearly and powerfully; marshals his arguments with tact and effect; is nowhere freakish, or extravagant; never fails in good temper, or in good sense.

Upon the whole, no other American author of the colonial time is the equal of John Wise in the union of great breadth and power of thought with great splendor of style; and he stands almost alone among our early writers for the blending of a racy and dainty humor with impassioned earnestness.

His force and brilliance in statement cannot be fully represented in sentences torn from their connection; yet on almost every page one meets terse and quotable sayings, here and there long passages grand for their nobility of feeling, their truth, and the music of their words. "Order," says he, "is both the beauty and safety of the universe. Take away the decorum whereby the whole hangs together, the great frame of nature is unpinned, and drops piece from piece; and out of a beautiful structure we have a chaos."³ "If men are trusted with duty," he exclaims, "they must trust that, and not events. If men are placed at helm to steer in all weather that blows, they must not be afraid of the waves or a wet coat."⁴

¹ "Vindication," etc. 59-60.

² "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused," 40.

³ *Ibid.* 60.

⁴ *Ibid.* 53.

Here is his stately and passionate chant of homage to religion: "Religion, in its infallible original, the wisdom and authority of God; in its Infinite Object, the ineffable Persons and Perfections of the Divine Essence; in its means, the gospel of salvation; in its inspired wakeful and capacious ministry; in its subject, the inestimable immortal soul of man; in its transcendent effects, in time the charming peace and joys of conscience, in eternity the joyful retreat and shouts of glory;—is the most incomparable gift of Palladium which ever came from heaven. Amongst all the favors of the Father of Lights, there is none parallel with this; when disclosed in its beauty, it ravisheth all the intellects of the universe; and challenge may be made that the prerogatives and glory belonging to all the crowned heads in the world, do bow and wait upon its processions through the earth, to guard it from its innumerable and inveterate enemies. . . . It is certain that the church of Christ is the pillar of truth, or sacred recluse and peculiar asylum of Religion; and this sacred guest, Religion, which came in the world's infancy from heaven to gratify the solitudes of miserable man, when God had left him, hath long kept house with us in this land, to sweeten our wilderness-state; and the renowned churches here are her sacred palaces. Then, certainly, it is not fair for her lovers, under pretence of maintaining her welcome in greater state, to desolate her pleasing habitations, though they stand somewhat low like the myrtle grove."¹

Perhaps even greater than the distinction he deserves for his brilliant writing, is the distinction due him for the prophetic clearness, the courage, and the inapproachable ability with which, in that unfriendly time, he, almost alone among Americans, avowed his belief in civil governments founded on the idea of human equality. He was the first great American democrat. In the earlier years of the eighteenth century, he announced the political ideas that,

¹ "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused," 75-76.

fifty years later, took immortal form under the pen of Thomas Jefferson. Indeed, in 1772, when the doctrine of human right had come to be a very urgent and very practical one among men, the two books of John Wise were called for in Boston by the Revolutionary leaders; they were reprinted in response to this call; and they proved an armory of burnished weapons in all that stern fight. "The end of all good government is to cultivate humanity and promote the happiness of all, and the good of every man in all his rights, his life, liberty, estate, honor, and so forth, without injury or abuse to any."¹ No wonder that the writer of that sentence was called up from his grave, by the men who were getting ready for the Declaration of Independence!

VI.

Not long before the Revolutionary War, a distinguished clergyman of Boston, Charles Chauncey, then an aged man, said, in a letter to President Stiles, that of all the eminent men he had known in New England, Jeremiah Dummer was "for extent and strength of genius" one of the three greatest. By all contemporary allusions it is evident that this man was regarded in his day as having extraordinary ability. Certainly no other American of that period began life with more brilliant promise; perhaps none ended it under sadder disappointment. He was born in Boston about 1679, of a family prominent and honorable in the country from its earliest settlement. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1699, where his student-life was long perpetuated in splendid tradition. Being at that time of a singularly devout spirit, he chose theology for his profession, and entered upon the study of it with his usual ardor and thoroughness. He soon went abroad for larger opportunities of instruction, taking

¹ "Vindication," etc. 42.

his doctor's degree at the University of Utrecht;¹ and upon his return to New England, probably in 1704, he brought with him testimonials to his industry and blameless life while in Europe. To his friends and to himself he now probably seemed fully ripe for the illustrious service among the churches of New England to which he had been destined. He began to preach in the pulpits of Boston; but somehow, in spite of all his genius and all his vast academic preparation, his preaching did not make any impression. It was without fault, and without effect. Thus, on the twenty-ninth of October, 1704, he preached "A Discourse on the Holiness of the Sabbath Day." It was immaculate for orthodoxy, fitting even the most ascetic Puritan variety of that article; it had an abundance of Biblical, theological, and classical learning in it; it was smooth and liquid in style; indeed, it had nearly every quality of a speech, except fitness for being spoken. It was simply a labored literary essay, quite too bookish, ornate, and fine to have any practical effect either on saints or sinners. The sermon, however, was at once published,² under the high sanction of the venerable Increase Mather, who, in the preface, spoke of Dummer's unequalled success as a student at home and abroad, and of his personal excellence in creed and deed, but concluded with the alarming intimation that unless the churches of New England should make haste to possess themselves of this clerical prodigy, he would be very likely to withdraw into some other quarter of the universe.

The menace was unheeded. Dummer preached here and there for a time, but found no acceptable pulpit to which he was acceptable; and at last he gave up the quest. Five years later, 1709, he once more emerged into view. This time it was in London, in a new character, on a new

¹ In the Prince Library are copies of four of his university theses, in Latin, printed in Holland in 1702 and 1703, and showing his minute and large acquisitions in philological and theological learning.

² Republished, Boston, 1763.

theme. He had dropped his theological profession, and his theology, and, very likely, his religion; he had gone to England to be a politician, and to make for himself there a great career in secular life. He had arrived not long before the formation of the Tory ministry under Harley and St. John; and to the anguish of his friends in America, he soon allied himself with the latter powerful and profligate statesman; adopted his politics, and even his morals; served him in various secret negotiations; and had from him promises of high promotion. But, in 1714, the Queen died; Bolingbroke fled in disgrace to France; and poor Dummer, damned by such an alliance, found all his hopes of a political career in England blasted.¹ It was impossible for him to confess his failure by a return to his native land; and in England he remained during the rest of his days, becoming a member of the Middle Temple, and indulging in certain respectable laxities of conduct more suggestive of his later friends than of his earlier ones; at last, in 1739, he died, without ever grasping any of that glory in the world for which he had so laboriously qualified himself, almost unknown in the country which he had adopted, and long before forgotten in the country in which he was born.

Yet on behalf of Jeremiah Dummer it remains to be said, that whatever else, of true and good, he may have given up when he turned his back upon his own country, he never gave up his love for that country, or his passion to promote her welfare by his best labors. From 1710 to 1721, he served Massachusetts as its agent in London; and when that office was taken from him, he continued to serve her still, without appointment and without pay, whenever he found occasion. However much of an Englishman he may have become, he never ceased to be an American. Whatever he wrote for the public, is upon American topics; and his letters to his friends in this

¹ T. Hutchinson, "Hist. Mass. Bay," II. 170, note.

country showed at times a pensive and affectionate regret for the land and the life that he could never return to.

His memory as a writer will rest upon two publications, both being proofs not only of his fine literary accomplishments, but of his vigilant and laborious zeal for his country. The first was printed, in London, in 1709,¹ and is entitled, "A Letter to a Noble Lord concerning the late Expedition to Canada," wherein he makes three points: first, that the conquest of Canada was of great importance to England; second, that the late expedition was wisely planned; third, that its failure cannot be charged upon New England. It is an able and convincing essay, written in urbane and graceful style, everywhere bright and readable. It contains some striking illustrations of the adroitness with which the French missionaries in Canada aided the political designs of France; for instance, teaching their Indian converts that "the Virgin Mary was a French lady, and that her Son, the Saviour of the world, was crucified by the English." The book also denotes how early and passionate among the English colonies in America was the dread of the American power of France; thus, even in 1709, he says that those colonies can never be easy or happy "whilst the French are masters of Canada."²

But the second of Dummer's political publications is much the abler: "A Defence of the New England Charters." It was published in London in 1728,³ at a time when there was danger of a bill passing the House of Commons, annulling the charters granted to the New England colonies. It opens with a fine sketch of the origin and growth of those colonies, and of the circumstances under which the charters were given to them; and then proceeds to establish these four propositions: first, that the charter-governments have a good right to their charters; second,

¹ Reprinted, Boston, 1712.

² "A Letter to a Noble Lord," etc. 4.

³ Republished in London by J. Almon, in 1766, on account of its pertinence to colonial topics then under discussion.

that they have not forfeited them; third, that if they had, it would not be the interest of the crown to accept the forfeitures; and, fourth, that it is inconsistent with justice to disfranchise the charter-colonies by act of parliament. It is an admirable specimen of argumentative literature; strict in logic, strong in fact, clear, flowing, graceful, occasionally rising into noble enthusiasm, but always temperate, courteous, and cosmopolitan.

VII.

No one who would penetrate to the core of early American literature, and would read in it the secret history of the people in whose minds it took root and from whose minds it grew, may by any means turn away, in lofty literary scorn, from the almanac,—most despised, most prolific, most indispensable of books, which every man uses, and no man praises; the very quack, clown, pack-horse, and pariah of modern literature, yet the one universal book of modern literature; the supreme and only literary necessity even in households where the Bible and the newspaper are still undesired or unattainable luxuries.

The earliest record of this species of literature in America carries us back to the very beginning of printed literature in America; for, next after a sheet containing "The Freeman's Oath," the first production that came from the printing-press in this country was "An Almanac calculated for New England, by Mr. Pierce," and printed by Stephen Daye, at Cambridge, in 1639.¹ Thenceforward for a long time, scarcely a year passed over that solitary printing-press at Cambridge, without receiving a similar salute from it. In 1676, Boston itself grew wise enough to produce an almanac of its own. Ten years afterward, Philadelphia began to send forth almanacs—a trade in which, in the following century, it was to acquire special glory. In

¹ I. Thomas, "Hist. of Printing in Am." I. 46.

1697, New York entered the same enticing field of enterprise. The first almanac produced in Rhode Island, was in 1728; the first almanac produced in Virginia, was in 1731.¹ In 1733, Benjamin Franklin began to publish what he called "Poor Richard's Almanac," to which his own personal reputation has given a celebrity surpassing that of all other almanacs published anywhere in the world. Thus, year by year, with the multiplication of people and of printing-presses in this country, was there a multiplication of almanacs, some of them being of remarkable intellectual and even literary merit. From the first, they contained many of the traits that had become conventional in printed almanacs in Europe, ever since their first publication there in the fifteenth century; particularly astrological prophecies, or, as they were called, "prognostications," relating both to mankind and to the weather, and representing the traditional belief in the influence of the heavenly bodies upon mundane affairs. Gradually, to these were added other things,—scraps of wisdom, crumbs of history, snatches of verse, proverbs, jests, all scattered through the little book according to the convenience of the printer and the supposed benefit of the reader. Throughout our colonial time, when larger books were costly and few, the almanac had everywhere a hearty welcome and frequent perusal; the successive numbers of it were carefully preserved year after year; their margins and blank pages were often covered over with annotations, domestic and otherwise. Thus, John Cotton, it will be remembered, used the blank spaces in his almanacs as depositories for his stealthy attempts at verse. So, also, the historian, Thomas Prince, recorded in his almanacs the state of his accounts with his hair-dresser and wig-maker. A writer of some note,² born in Connecticut during the American Revolution, has left a vivid description of his own excite-

¹ For several of the above dates I depend upon Ainsworth R. Spofford, in "Am. Almanac" for 1878, 23-25.

² Joseph T. Buckingham, "Personal Memoirs," etc. I. 20.

ment, as a child, in reading again and again the literary treasures of the household, consisting, in large part, of a file of almanacs for fifty years.

One of the numerous myths still prevailing in the world with reference to Benjamin Franklin, describes him as the first founder of an almanac blending those qualities of shrewd instruction and keen mother-wit, that are to be seen in his famous series; a French encyclopædist, for example, declaring that Franklin "put forth the first popular almanac which spoke the language of reason."¹ In truth, much of the wisdom and wit introduced by Franklin into his almanac was borrowed from Bacon, Rabelais, Rochefoucauld, Steele, Swift, De Foe, and others;² but even the idea of introducing into an almanac wit and wisdom whether original or borrowed, had been thought of and put into practice before Franklin's "Poor Richard" was born. In 1728, five years before that event, Franklin's brother, James, sent forth the first number of "The Rhode Island Almanac;" and in its pages, year by year, one may find no little of that sagacity, humor, and knack of phrase, that did so much for the fortunes of his own runaway apprentice. But even three years before James Franklin's almanac appeared, Nathaniel Ames,³ a physician and inn-keeper of Dedham, Massachusetts, a man of original, vigorous, and pungent genius, began the publication of his "Astronomical Diary and Almanac;" which he continued to publish till his death in 1764; which, under his management, acquired an enormous popularity throughout New England; and which, from the first, contained in high perfection every type of excellence afterward illustrated in the almanac of Benjamin Franklin. Indeed, Ames's almanac was in most respects better than Franklin's, and was, probably, the most pleasing representative we have of a

¹ "Am. Almanac," for 1878, 25.

² A delightful account of "Poor Richard's Almanac" is in James Parton's "Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin," I. 227-240.

³ He was the father of the celebrated orator and statesman, Fisher Ames.

form of literature that furnished so much entertainment to our ancestors, and that preserves for us so many characteristic tints of their life and thought.

Nathaniel Ames made his almanac a sort of annual cyclopædia of information and amusement,—a vehicle for the conveyance to the public of all sorts of knowledge and nonsense, in prose and verse, from literature, history and his own mind, all presented with brevity, variety, and infallible tact. He had the instinct of a journalist; and, under a guise that was half-frolicsome, the sincerity and benignant passion of a public educator. He carried into the furthest wildernesses of New England some of the best English literature; pronouncing there, perhaps for the first time, the names of Addison, Thomson, Pope, Dryden, Butler, Milton; and repeating there choice fragments of what they had written. Thus, eight years before Benjamin Franklin had started his almanac, Nathaniel Ames was publishing one that had all of its best qualities,—fact and frolic, the wisdom of the preacher without his solemnity, terse sayings, shrewdness, wit, homely wisdom, all sparkling in piquant phrase.

As the public expected the almanac-maker to be a prophet, Nathaniel Ames gratified the public; and he freely predicted future events, but always with a merry twinkle in his eye, and always ready to laugh the loudest at his own failure to predict them aright. He mixes, in delightful juxtaposition, absurd prognostications, curt jests, and aphorisms of profound wisdom, the whole forming a miscellany even now extremely readable, and sure, at that time, to raise shouts of laughter around thousands of fire-places where food for laughter was much needed. Thus,

January 1. "About the beginning of the year expect plenty of rain or snow."

"Warm and clears off cold again."

May 22. "Some materials about this time are hatched for the clergy to debate on."

October 21. "He that lives by fraud is in danger of dying a knave."

November 9. "These aspects show violent winds and in winter storms of driving snow ; mischiefs by Indians, if no peace ; and among us, feuds, quarrels, bloody-noses, broken pates—if not necks."

November 24. "If there was less debating and more acting, 'twould be better times."

December 7-10. "Ladies, take heed,
Lay down your fans,
And handle well
Your warming-pans."

December 15-18. "This cold, uncomfortable weather
Makes Jack and Gill lie close together."

December 20-22. "The lawyers' tongues—they never freeze,
If warmed with honest clients' fees."¹

Having been laughed at for his false predictions, he uses the almanac for 1729 to join in the laugh, and to turn the occasion of it into a witty and instructive home-thrust at every reader :

"Man was at first a perfect, upright creature,
The lively image of his great Creator.
When Adam fell, all men in him transgressed ;
And since that time they err that are the best.
The printer errs ; I err,—much like the rest.
Welcome's that man for to complain of me,
Whose self and works are quite from errors free."

Sometimes, in a more serious tone, he gives his real opinion about this traditional department of the almanac, and helps to lift his readers above the demand for it : "He who has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, knows, and he only knows with absolute certainty, what will come to pass. The Book of Fate is hid from all created beings. . . . Indeed, the Devil does not know so much of future events, as many expect an almanac-maker should foretell ; although it must be owned that they are willing to allow him the help of the Devil for his information."²

But everywhere it is plain enough that the author wears

¹ Almanac for 1749.

² Almanac for 1763.

his mask of jester, only to hide a most earnest and friendly face; and having by his mirth gained admission to every New England cabin, he sits down with the family around the great crackling fire, and helps them to a wisdom that will enable them to keep on laughing. Thus, in the almanac for 1754, he has a preliminary address to the reader, uttered in the tone of a Cobbett or a Greeley,—a born tribune of the people: "I have filled the two last pages with an essay on regimen. I don't pretend to direct the learned; the rich and voluptuous will scorn my direction, and sneer or rail at any that would reclaim them; but since this sheet enters the solitary dwellings of the poor and illiterate, where the studied ingenuity of the learned writer never comes, if these brief hints do good, it will rejoice the heart of your humble servant, Nathaniel Ames."

February 24-27. "If you fall into misfortunes, creep through those bushes which have the least briers."

March 21-23. "Expectation waits to know whether the mountain bears a mouse or no."

October 25-28. "There are three faithful friends—an old wife, an old dog, and ready cash."

November 6-8. "Were things done twice, many would be wise."¹

July 16-27. "Every man carries a fool in his sleeve; with some he appears bold, with some he only pops out now and then, but the wise keep him hid."

September 12-16. "To some men their country is their shame; and some are the shame of their country."²

He sprinkles his pages with wholesome suggestions about health-getting and health-keeping. For September, 1762, he says: "This month is a proper season to recruit the unhealthy, by taking Dr. Horse and riding long journeys—though moderately." The gospel that he preaches is the gospel of health, virtue, economy, industry, content; he shows that always grumbling is either a vice or a disease, and that whichever it be, the first duty of every man is to rid himself of it:

¹ Almanac for 1758.

² Almanac for 1763.

" As for myself, whom poverty prevents
 From being angry at so great expense,

 I choose to labor, rather than to fret;
 What's rage in some, in me goes off in sweat.
 If times are ill, and things seem never worse,
 Men, manners, to reclaim,—I, take my horse :
 One mile reforms 'em ; or, if aught remain
 Unpurged—'tis but to ride as far again.
 Thus on myself in toils I spend my rage :
 I pay the fine, and that absolves the age.
 Sometimes, still more to interrupt my ease,
 I take my pen, and write such things as these ;
 Which, though all other merit be denied,
 Show my devotion still to be employed.

 And since midst indolence, spleen will prevail,
 Since who do nothing else, are sure to rail,
 Men should be suffered thus to play the fool
 To keep from hurt, as children go to school."¹

The almanac for 1736 ends with a brief prose essay, which is an amusing miscellany of physical learning and humor, all intended to interest the reader and to advertise the merits of a certain invaluable medicine—worm-seed for children; concluding with this paragraph worthy of the shrewdness of Poor Richard himself: "Some nurses are so superstitious that they dare not give their children worm-seed without pounding and sifting it, affirming that every seed that escapes being bruised in the mortar will become a live worm in the bowels of the child. But, by the by, it is an excellent medicine for the purpose, and they need not be afraid to use it; for, if they will prove that it can breed worms in children, I can as easily prove that it can breed children in women; and so those unhappy persons who have had the ill-luck to have children without fathers, need not lie under the imputation of scandal, if they can produce sufficient evidence that they have taken worm-seed."

¹ Almanac for 1757

His pages are sprinkled with verses from the English poets and from his own pen,—the latter often of great vigor and sprightliness. For 1736, he spreads over the almanac a poem of twelve stanzas, one stanza being prefixed to each month. The subject of the poem is the Day of Judgment, and is so vivid and powerful in its descriptions, and is so blended with ominous references to the stars and to the warring elements, that it must have carried awe into many impressible minds, as if the omniscient almanac-maker intended actually to announce the coming of the awful day that very year. This is the stanza for January :

“ The muses tremble with a faltering wing,
While nature’s great catastrophe they sing ;
For Helicon itself, their sacred throne,
Must to the womb of chaos back return.
The cheerful region of the earth and air
Is filled with horror, darkness, and despair.”

So, with fascinating gloom opens the year ; and thus it proceeds, with variations of poetic horror, month by month. In March, we have this mystic and dreadful description of the moon and stars :

“ No more she rules as regent of the night,
But fills her orb with blood instead of light ;
And dissolution reigns both near and far,
Through heaven’s wide circuit round. Each shining star
His intricate nocturnal mazes stops,
And from his place assigned in heaven down drops.”

In the following month things grow rapidly worse. The stars, it will be remembered, have fallen :

“ Their light extinct, nature in darkness ends,
Except what light hell’s horrid bosom sends
Around the sky ; her baneful torches come
To light dissolving nature to her tomb.
The earth with trembling agonies doth roll,
As though she mixed her centre with the pole.”

In May,

“ The seas do roar ; and every peaceful lake
And wandering rivers horrid murmurings make ;
The rocks explode, and trembling mountains nod,
And valleys rise at the approaching God ;
From heaven's high court angelic throngs descend ;
Myriads this great solemnity attend.”

It must have given some relief to sensitive readers to cast the eye further down the page, and to read in the author's prose his cheerful prophecies concerning the course of the weather for that very month ; for he assures them of “ a fine pleasant air, with gentle gales,” and of “ fair, pleasant, growing weather.” And although there is an ominous threat of combustibility during the last week—“ This week will afford heat and thunder”—yet the prospect is redeemed by the subsequent promise of “ now and then a sprinkling of rain,”—which, of course, must defer the general conflagration. The stanza for July concludes with this couplet :

“ A rending sound from the expanded skies
Commands the dead, the sleepy dead, to rise ;”

which harmonizes admirably with the weather probabilities for the same time ; “ The month ends with thunder and hot weather.”

The almanac for 1749, the year succeeding the close of King George's War, has a fine literary tone, and its poetic motto, on the title-page, is a noble prophecy of peace in the world :

“ No heroes' ghosts, with garments rolled in blood,
Majestic stalk ; the golden age renewed,
No hollow drums in Flanders beat ; the breath
Of brazen trumpets rings no peals of death.
The milder stars their peaceful beams afford,
And sounding hammer beats the wounding sword
To ploughshares now ; Mars must to Ceres yield,
And exiled Peace returns and takes the field.”

The essay at the end of the almanac for 1758, is of unusual merit for thought and vivacity of expression. It is a fine specimen of what we now call a leading editorial article—terse, epigrammatic, vigorous, formed to catch and to hold the attention; and it is a very creditable example of literary style. It was written in the midst of the struggle between France and England for the empire of America. It is upon “America—its Past, Present, and Future State.” With reference to the Past, he says: “Time has cast a shade upon this scene. Since the creation, innumerable accidents have happened here, the bare mention of which would create wonder and surprise; but they are all lost in oblivion. The ignorant natives, for want of letters, have forgot their stock, and know not from whence they came, or how, or when they arrived here, or what has happened since.” Then glancing at the events that have happened in America since the arrival of the Europeans, he describes the magnificent territory of the North-West then in dispute: “Time was when we might have been possessed of it; at this time two mighty kings contend for this inestimable prize. Their respective claims are to be measured by the length of their swords. The poet says, ‘the Gods and Opportunity ride post;’ that you must take her by the forelock, being bald behind. Have we not too fondly depended upon our numbers? Sir Francis Bacon says, ‘The wolf careth not how many the sheep be.’ But numbers, well-spirited, with the blessing of heaven, will do wonders when by military skill and discipline the commanders can actuate, as by one soul, the most numerous bodies of armed people. Our numbers will not avail till the colonies are united. . . . If we do not join heart and hand in the common cause against our exulting foes, but fall to disputing amongst ourselves, it may really happen as the governor of Pennsylvania told his assembly, ‘We shall have no privilege to dispute about, nor country to dispute in.’”

His treatment of the Future State of America shows a

remarkable grasp of facts relating to the physical resources of the continent, and an unusual power of reason in constructing the possibilities of civil and material development, especially in the West: "Here we find a vast stock of proper materials for the art and ingenuity of man to work on,—treasures of immense worth, concealed from the poor, ignorant, aboriginal natives. . . . As the celestial light of the gospel was directed here by the finger of God, it will doubtless finally drive the long, long night of heathenish darkness from America. . . . So arts and sciences will change the face of nature in their tour from hence over the Appalachian Mountains to the Western Ocean; and as they march through the vast desert, the residence of wild beasts will be broken up, and their obscene howl cease forever. Instead of which, the stones and trees will dance together at the music of Orpheus, the rocks will disclose their hidden gems, and the inestimable treasures of gold and silver be broken up. Huge mountains of iron ore are already discovered; and vast stores are reserved for future generations. This metal, more useful than gold and silver, will employ millions of hands, not only to form the martial sword and peaceful share alternately, but an infinity of utensils improved in the exercise of art and handicraft amongst men. . . . Shall not then these vast quarries that teem with mechanic stone,—those for structure be piled into great cities, and those for sculpture into statues, to perpetuate the honor of renowned heroes—even those who shall now save their country?" He then closes with this appeal to posterity: "O ye unborn inhabitants of America! should this page escape its destined conflagration at the year's end, and these alphabetical letters remain legible when your eyes behold the sun after he has rolled the seasons round for two or three centuries more, you will know that in Anno Domini, 1758, we dreamed of your times."

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW ENGLAND: HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

- I.—Further development of the historic spirit in New England—Biography and biographers—Ebenezer Turell—His biographies of Jane Turell and of Benjamin Colman.
- II.—William Hubbard—Picture of him by John Dunton—His literary culture and aptitude—Qualities of his style—His "General History of New England"—His "Indian Wars"—Celebrity of the latter—Its faults and merits—Represents the wrath of the people against the Indians—Portrait of a noble savage.
- III.—Other literary memorials of the long conflict with the Indians—Mary Rowlandson and her thrilling "Narrative" of Indian captivity—"The Redeemed Captive," by John Williams of Deerfield—Benjamin Church—His history of King Philip's War and of other struggles with the Indians—Interest of his narratives—Samuel Penhallow—His history of Indian wars—Pictures of heroism and cruelty—His reminiscences of classical study—Samuel Niles—His "History of the Indian and French Wars."
- IV.—Thomas Prince—His eminent career—His special taste and training for history—Has the cardinal virtues of an historian—His "Chronological History of New England"—Thoroughness of his methods—Salient features of the book—Its worthiness.
- V.—John Callender—His careful sketch of the first century of Rhode Island's history.
- VI.—William Douglass—The life and the singularities of the man—A literary Ishmaelite—His ability and self-confidence—His sarcastic account of the medical profession in America—His "Summary"—A passionate, heterogeneous, able book—Its style and scope—Its drolleries—His dislike of the Indians, of the French, of Whitefield, of Bishop Berkeley, and of paper-money—General estimate of his book.

I.

THE one form of secular literature for which, during the entire colonial age, the writers of New England had the most authentic vocation, is history.

All persons of devout, brooding, and introverted natures

are apt to keep records of themselves,—to have the historic feeling; for to such persons life seems so costly and venerable a thing, that they would hold the memory of it from lapsing into that grave of the past, whither life itself every moment is hurrying. The men and women who founded the sturdy little commonwealths of New England, had such natures; they revered themselves, they revered their lives, they revered the stupendous task to which they were giving their lives. By a law as deep as their own souls, they were, inevitably, from the first, a race of diarists, chroniclers, biographers, autobiographers, historians. And their children and their children's children were like unto them. The historic feeling did not perish, or even abate, with the passing of the generations. It thrived rather, and grew lustier, nourishing itself on a finer and broader acceptance of life, and on the sweet memory of its own heroic age.

Our second literary period produced four considerable historians,—William Hubbard, Cotton Mather, Thomas Prince, Thomas Hutchinson: the first two excelling, in popularity, all other historians of the colonial time; the last two excelling all others in specific training for the profession of history, and in the conscious accumulation of materials for historic work.¹

Of that species of history that is devoted to the lives of individuals rather than of communities, there were many specimens produced in the colonial epoch; such, for example, as biographies of John Cotton, Richard Mather, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and of the great army of divines, heroes, and sages that abide eternally in the "Magnalia." But it is a singular fact that, in literary quality, the biographies written in colonial New England are far inferior to its histories.

¹ Of these four historians, it will be most convenient to deal with the last, Thomas Hutchinson, in another volume, to be devoted to the literature of the American Revolution.

The best example of its biographical work is "The Life and Character of the Reverend Benjamin Colman," by his son-in-law, Ebenezer Turell, published in Boston, in 1749. Even this distinction, however, does not imply exalted merit. In its construction, the book imitates a bad model,—Samuel Mather's "Life of Cotton Mather,"—wherein the narrative is arranged, not in the natural order of time, but in the artificial one of topics. The style of Turell's book is superior to Samuel Mather's, being pure and pleasant; and his admiration for his subject, while it is hearty and reverent, never betrays him into hyperboles of laudation.¹

II.

William Hubbard was born in England in 1621; came to New England in his childhood; and was one of that remarkable group of nine young men whom Harvard College sent forth, in 1642, as the first specimens of high culture achieved in the woods of America. By training, by strong aptitude, and by prevailing engagements, he was almost a professional man of letters. The most of his life he passed as minister of the First Church at Ipswich, Massachusetts, where his learning and eloquence won for him a commanding reputation. But his distinction points to the literary rather than to the theological side of personal greatness. Indeed, the breadth of his thought, his geniality, and his tolerance seems well-nigh to have cracked the shell of clerical propriety in which he was encased. Thomas Hutchinson² speaks of him as having "a good degree of

¹ Turell also published, in 1735, "Memoirs of the Life and Death of the Pious and Ingenious Mrs. Jane Turell." The book is largely made up of her writings, especially her poetry. She was the literary phenomenon of an admiring circle of friends; but she died before she had outgrown the feebleness of poetic imitation. Indeed, she left no proofs of poetic genius, more notable than are to be found in the desk of almost any spirited school-girl with a tendency toward emotional effervescence in verse.

² "Hist. Mass. Bay," II. 136, note.

catholicism," which, as that historian suggests, "was not accounted the most valuable part of his character in the age in which he lived." He resided in his parish of Ipswich to the great age of eighty-three; and from contemporary allusions we may picture him to ourselves as a stately, affable, and accomplished gentleman, the ideal country-pastor in a highly intellectual community,—passing the most of his time in his library, and filling the long quiet spaces of his life with various culture. The eccentric London bookseller, John Dunton, who made a voyage of business to New England in 1686, has left a lively picture of Hubbard, by whom the bookseller was hospitably received on his visit to Ipswich: "The benefit of nature and the fatigue of study have equally contributed to his eminence; neither are we less obliged to both than himself, for he fully communicates of his learning to all who have the happiness to share in his converse. In a word, he is learned without ostentation and vanity, and gives all his productions . . . a delicate turn and grace."¹ Like nearly all his clerical associates in those days, he published occasional sermons; and these, having the unusual quality of verbal elegance, did much to form his reputation as a writer of genuine literary skill.² But his most important work was done as an historian; and as such he represents a clear advance, at least in the literary quality of his labor. He had an ear for style, something of poetic feeling, a conscious purpose of art. His hand

¹ J. Dunton, "Life and Errors," I. 134.

² I think, however, that the praise of Hubbard as a writer has been overdone. Thus, John Eliot, in his "Biographical Dictionary," speaks of Hubbard as "superior to all his contemporaries as a prose writer;" and James Savage, in *N. A. Review*, II. 221-230, speaks of Hubbard's election-sermon as surpassed in style by "no work of the two next generations." That sermon is able and impressive; its diction is smooth and dignified; yet it is far inferior, in all respects, to the sermons of Urian Oakes, John Barnard, Benjamin Colman, Jonathan Mayhew, or Mather Byles. His own fellow-townsmen, John Wise, was vastly his superior as a prose writer.

loved to form sentences that had precision in them, a liquid flow, the lingering echo of pleasant sounds, imaginative meanings.

In his capacity of historian, Hubbard wrote two works, considerable in size, very unequal in merit. The less valuable one is "A General History of New England from the Discovery to 1680," left by him in manuscript, and not put into print until the present century.¹ Of this work, many pages are transferred solidly from Morton's "New England's Memorial;" and for the period between 1630 and 1650, the larger part of Hubbard is but a literal repetition of Winthrop. The book seems to have been done as a mere literary job.

A more agreeable task awaits us when we come to the study of Hubbard's "Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New England,"² from the earliest white settlement to the year 1677. If, in the seventeenth century, was produced in America any prose work which, for its almost universal diffusion among the people, deserves the name of an American classic, it is this work. The author evidently wrought upon it with genuine zest. It is not without serious faults. As a whole the narrative would now seem tedious, being clogged by petty items, often wandering into digressions, lacking a continuous and culminating power. Moreover, the work has a still greater blemish; it is inaccurate. An antiquarian of our time calls the author "the careless Hubbard;"³ and one of his own contemporaries says, with some exaggeration, of the work

¹ First published by Mass. Hist. Soc. 1815; reprinted by the same Society in 1848, under the editorial care of Thaddeus Mason Harris.

² First published, both in Boston and in London, in 1677. The London edition is the more accurate, and probably had the personal supervision of the author, who, there is reason to think, went to London with a copy of his work. The best reprint of the work is one edited by S. G. Drake, 2 vols. Roxbury, 1865. My quotations, however, are from the Stockbridge reprint, 1803; but I have collated them with the corresponding passages in Drake's ed.

³ Alexander Young, "Chron. Pilg." 334, note.

now before us, "the mistakes are judged to be many more than the truths in it."¹ In spite of all this, however, as a narrative embodying the spirit of early New England heroism, it has qualities that still give to it something of the interest which it had for its original readers. In many passages the style is strong, picturesque, dramatic, enlivened by an occasional touch of sarcasm or humor; detached incidents are often told with thrilling effect. It is not impossible for us even now to understand why, during several generations, the book had an absorbing fascination for its readers in New England, to whom these Indian stories brought home again the traditions of dreadful experience and daring achievement on the part of their own kindred.

In one thing, certainly, the book is authentic; it represents the immeasurable rage against the Indians, that had at last taken possession of the white inhabitants of New England,—their final purpose to count out those bipeds from the list of human beings, and to wipe them out from the face of the earth. Here Hubbard is the frank voice of his contemporaries. He utters words about the red men, that are rasping and fell; such as one hears still, upon the same topic, on the American frontiers. In his pages, the Indians are "treacherous villains,"² "the dross of mankind,"³ "the dregs and lees of the earth,"⁴ "faithless and ungrateful monsters,"⁵ "children of the Devil, full of all subtlety and malice,"⁶ and Philip himself is "this treacherous and perfidious caitiff."⁷ "Subtlety, malice, and revenge seem to be as inseparable from them as if it were a part of their essence. Whatever hopes may be of their conversion to Christianity in after time, there is but little appearance of any truth in their hearts at present, where so much of the contrary is ordinarily

¹ John Cotton of Plymouth, in letter to Increase Mather, 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. VIII. 232.

² "Indian Wars," 18.

³ Ibid. 18.

⁴ Ibid. 18.

⁵ Ibid. 118.

⁶ Ibid. 120.

⁷ Ibid. 69.

breathed out of their mouths.”¹ Of the fate of certain Indians taken in battle, he has this quiet and classic description: “The men . . . were turned presently into Charon’s ferry-boat, under the command of skipper Gallop, who dispatched them, a little without the harbor.”²

Along these old pages, which almost quiver with fury against the Indians, and are strewn with words that seem to weary the vocabulary of execration and contempt, we now and then come to a portrait of some Indian who is neither brute nor caitiff, but for pride and fortitude towers into a hero, and renders credible Dryden’s conception of “the noble savage.” One day, during King Philip’s War, some white men and a few Indian allies, resting in front of their camp in the woods, caught sight, at a distance, of a stalwart Indian, of princely air, running swiftly as if from pursuit. They “guessed by the swiftness of his motion, that he fled as if an enemy.” They instantly joined in the chase; and one of them, an Indian named Catapazet, “put him so hard to it, that he cast off, first his blanket, then his silver-laced coat and belt of peag, which made Catapazet conclude it was the right bird. . . . So as they forced him to take the water, through which as he overhastily plunged, his foot slipping upon a stone, it made him fall into the water so deep as it wetted his gun; upon which accident, he confessed soon after, that his heart and his bowels turned within him, so as he became like a rotten stick, void of strength; insomuch as one Monopoide, a Pequod, swiftest of foot, laid hold of him within thirty rod of the riverside, without his making any resistance; though he was a very proper man, of goodly stature and great courage of mind, as well as strength of body. One of the first English that came up with him was Robert Stanton, a young man that scarce had reached the twenty-second year of his age; yet adventuring to ask him a question or two, to whom this manly

¹ “Indian Wars,” 359-360.

² *Ibid.* 42.

sachem, looking with a little neglect upon his youthful face, replied in broken English, 'You much child, no understand matters of war; let your brother or your chief come, him I will answer;' and was as good as his word, acting herein as if, by a Pythagorean metempsychosis, some old Roman ghost had possessed the body of this western pagan. . . . He continuing in the same his obstinate resolution, was carried soon after to Stonington, where he was shot to death by some of his own quality. . . . This was the confusion of a damned wretch, that had often opened his mouth to blaspheme the name of the living God, and those that made profession thereof. . . . And when he was told his sentence was to die, he said he liked it well; that he should die before his heart was soft, or had spoken anything unworthy of himself."¹

III.

Of the sorrowful conflict in New England between Englishmen and Indians, reaching its reddest crisis in 1676, there is no more graphic or more exquisite literary memorial than a little book written by a woman—who had in her own person a frightful experience of it—Mary Rowlandson, wife of the pastor of the church at Lancaster, then an outpost of civilization. In the bitterness of winter, February the tenth, 1676, while her husband was absent in Boston, the town in which she lived was suddenly assaulted and destroyed by Indians; and she, with her children, was carried away into captivity, experiencing horrible treatment. After eleven weeks and five days, with money raised for the purpose by the women of Boston, she was ransomed; and while all the anguish of her fright and suffering was still fresh in her memory, she wrote a narrative of her captivity, which was first printed in New England in 1682, was reissued in London the same year, and has

¹ "Indian Wars," 167-169.

been repeatedly published since then.¹ It is a series of life-like pictures of the wild and sorrowful scenes that she had encountered; is most effective in its artless touches of pathos; and is such an exhibition of Indian barbarity as must have driven still deeper into the minds of the New-Englanders their hate of the red men, and their quiet purpose of giving them over to doom. The diction of this little book is admirable,—the pure, idiomatic, and sinewy English of a cultivated American matron.

Another powerful picture of Indian cruelty, but referring to a time nearly thirty years later, is "The Redeemed Captive," by John Williams,² who, in 1686, at the age of twenty-two, had entered upon his life-long pastorate at Deerfield, Massachusetts. This village was then on the furthest edge of the white settlements, and was protected from Indian assaults only by a rude picketed fort. Sentinels kept guard every night; even in the daytime, no one left his door-steps without a musket; and neighborly communication between the houses was kept up principally by underground passages from cellar to cellar. In the winter of 1704, the inhabitants had received warning of unusual danger approaching them; and at their request twenty soldiers had been sent to them as a special guard. On the night of February twenty-eighth, the watch patrolled the streets until just before dawn, when, unfortunately, they yielded to the desire for sleep; upon which, three hundred Frenchmen and Indians from Canada, who had been skulking in the neighborhood, waiting for such an opportunity, got into the hapless town. What followed, in that hideous winter-darkness, when savage and fiendish lusts were at once let loose upon victims who were absolutely powerless, is told, with genuine pathos, by the pas-

¹ The first ed. is entitled "The Sovereignty and Goodness of God : A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson." The 6th ed. appeared in 1828.

² Born at Roxbury, 1664; graduated at Harvard, 1683.

tor, himself and family being among the chief sufferers.¹ In the same touching manner, he narrates the whole story of his captivity: his long, faint march through the snows to Canada; the cruelties and the courtesies he experienced there; his efforts to recover his children from the Indians; the adroit and persistent attempts of the Jesuits to induce him to apostatize from his faith; and finally, after a bondage of more than two years, his redemption and return home, with all his children, excepting one, a daughter, who remained the rest of her life among her captors.² In the year following his restoration, he published his famous narrative, which has since then been six times reprinted, and has contributed its tinge of horror and hate to the white man's memory of the Indian.

In the lineage of New England military prowess, a true descendant of Miles Standish and of John Mason was Colonel Benjamin Church; born at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1639; founder of Little Compton, where he died in 1718; a matchless guerilla-leader; the most famous Indian-fighter of his day; especially renowned as the conqueror of King Philip, and as the invincible champion of the white men in five other wars against the Indians. In his old age, he put into the hands of his son, Thomas, the memoranda he had kept of his campaigns, and he caused to be written and published, in 1716, "*Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip's War . . . as also of Expeditions more lately made against the Common Enemy and Indian Rebels in the Eastern Parts of New England*;"³ a book that stirred the very heart of New England, holding

¹ "Redeemed Captive," 10-17.

² This daughter was Eunice, then ten years old. She could not afterward be induced to leave the Indians, having herself become an Indian in habit and language, and having been smitten by the almost incurable fascination of savage life. She married an Indian; and their supposed grandson or great-grandson was Eleazer Williams, once notorious in this country for his claim to be the lost Dauphin, son of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

³ Reprinted, with elaborate and careful editing by Henry Martyn Dexter, Boston, first part, 1865; second part, 1867.

"children from play and old men from the chimney-corner," having indeed a spell almost beyond the reach of literary art. It is a soldier's bluff narrative of his own dangerous and enticing adventures; it is full of individual incidents—risks, grapplings, bloodshed, leaps in the dark, all manner of stern things. The reader seems to be a listener, and to be sitting by the side of this scarred and ancient paladin of the New England bush-whackers, and to hear his very talk, as he narrates, frankly, vividly, and always with a strong man's modesty, the deeds that once saved every New England man's door-post from being bespattered with the blood of his own wife and children.

Another fine old chronicler of the Indian troubles was Samuel Penhallow, born in England in 1665, and educated at the celebrated dissenting academy of Charles Morton in Newington Green, where he may have had Daniel De Foe for a school-mate. In 1686, with his teacher, he came to New England, intending to complete his studies for the Christian ministry; instead of which, however, he married a young woman of great wealth at Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and thenceforward resided there, devoting himself to the care of his property, and to the public service. He built a stately mansion; lived in the grand manner of our colonial gentry; practised a boundless hospitality; acquired great influence in the province; was for many years its treasurer; and died, as its chief-justice, in 1726. New Hampshire, being then a frontier colony, had in its outlying settlements no rest, day or night, from the peril of an Indian massacre; and in the very year in which Penhallow died, he published, in Boston, "*The History of the Wars of New England with the Eastern Indians*,"¹ covering the period from 1703 to 1726,—a realistic and vivid story of all that time of anguish, of the various assaults of the Indians upon the habitations of white men,

¹ Reprinted in Boston, 1826; also in N. H. Hist. Soc. Coll. I.; also in Philadelphia, 1859. My references are to the reprint last named.

especially of several stiff and dreadful fights in which the two races grappled together in the woods. He himself says of his book that he might have named it, after Orosius, "*De Miseriâ Hominum*," since it is "no other than a narrative of tragical incursions perpetrated by bloody pagans, who are monsters of such cruelty that the words of Virgil may not unaptly be applied to them :

*Tristius haud illis monstrum, nec saevior ulla
Pestis et ira deûm.*"¹

He indicates the cruelty of the savages rather by harrowing facts than by epithets; yet the flow of the history is sometimes broken by a sentence in which one almost hears a sob of grief and rage. No veil is cast by him over ghastly and blood-clotted things; our sensibilities are never spared; we come face to face, constantly, with the hard and the horrible. In one place, we read the proclamation of the government offering from ten to fifty pounds for every Indian scalp that shall be brought in; in another, we see a procession of white captives driven onward through the woods, fainting by the way, some of them knocked on the head, "teeming women in cold blood . . . ript open, others fastened to stakes and burnt alive."² We have a glimpse, too, of a scene like this: A group of Indians one day skulking near the negligent garrison of Haverhill, and taking it by surprise; the sentinel is slain; the only white person at all adequate being a brave woman, who "perceiving the misery that was attending her, and having boiling soap on the fire," throws it over the assailants, scalding one of them to death. But she is carried off by the savages; after a few days of weariness and cruelty she is delivered of a child; "but the babe soon perished . . . by the cruelty of the Indians, who, as it cried, threw hot embers in its mouth."³ On another page, we are made acquainted with a most gritty hero, one Lieutenant Robbins, who, being mortally wounded in Lovewell's famous

¹ "The History," etc. 13.

² Ibid. 47.

³ Ibid. 23.

fight, is about to be left on the field by his retreating companions; but "being sensible of his dying state, desired one of the company to charge his gun and leave it with him, being persuaded that the Indians by the morning would come and scalp him, but was desirous of killing one more before he died."¹

It lends a sort of charm to this unshrinking narrative of human wretchedness, that the author often dashes his story with reminiscences of his early classical studies, giving to it a gentle flavor of pedantry, and especially suggesting a piquant contrast between lettered and elegant peace and the savagery of the facts which he records. He quotes Virgil, Horace, Plutarch. Now and then he finds a parallelism between these fatal incidents done in the American wilderness, and others done to immortal remembrance in Greek or Roman story: as, that two aged men, "Mr. Phipenny and Mr. Kent," were attacked by Indians, "and soon fell by their fury; for, being advanced in years, they were so infirm that I might say of them, as Juvenal did of Priam, they had scarce blood enough left to tinge the knife of the sacrifice."² This conjunction of Priam and Mr. Phipenny is unexpected, at the least.

We must make room for one more of these historians of New England's agony of effort against its foes,—Samuel Niles, who was a Harvard graduate, an eminent minister, and the author of a few books on theology and church-polity. His special drift was toward history. In 1747, he published a narrative, in crude verse, of the reduction of Louisburg; and he left in manuscript a voluminous "History of the Indian and French Wars."³ The life of the author stretched from before the time of King Philip's War until after the time of the conquest of Canada; and from his own memory he was able to compose

¹ "The History," etc. 113.

² *Ibid.* 20.

³ Printed in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. VI. 154-279, and in 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. V. 309-589.

large portions of this work. He used freely, besides, the labors of others. The book is written with some vigor and verbal skill; but the narrative is straggling and long-drawn, and the interest of the reader soon perishes in a wilderness of petty details.

IV.

Thomas Prince was born at Sandwich, Massachusetts, in 1687; was graduated at Harvard in 1707; and from 1718 to 1758,—the last forty years of his life,—was pastor of the South Church, Boston; during all those years filling a high and great space in the thoughts of his contemporaries. He had prepared himself for the public service by diligent study at home, and by eight years of observation abroad; he was a man of most tolerant and brotherly spirit; his days were filled by gentle and gracious and laborious deeds; he was a great scholar; he magnified his office and edified the brethren by publishing a large number of judicious and nutritious sermons; he also revised and improved the New England Psalm Book, “by an endeavor after a yet nearer approach to the inspired original, as well as to the rules of poetry;”¹ he took a special interest in physical science, and formed quite definite opinions about earthquakes, comets, “the electrical substance,” and so forth. For all these things, he was deeply honored in his own time, and would have been deeply forgotten in ours, had he not added to them very unique performances as an historian. No American writer before Thomas Prince, qualified himself for the service of history by so much conscious and specific preparation; and though others did more work in that service, none did better work than he.

The foundation of his character as an historian was laid in reverence, not only for truth, but for precision, and in willingness to win it at any cost of labor and of time. He

¹ Part of title-page, first ed. Boston, 1758.

likewise felt the peculiar authority of originals in historical testimony, and the potential value, for historical illustration, of all written or printed materials whatsoever; and while he was yet a college-boy, driven by the sacred avarice of an antiquarian and a bibliographer, he began to gather that great library of early American documents, which kept growing upon his hands in magnitude and in wealth as long as his life lasted, and which, notwithstanding the ravages of time, of British troops, of book-borrowers, and of book-thieves, still remains for him a barrier against oblivion, and for every student of early American thought and action, a copious treasure-house of help.¹

Even in childhood, Thomas Prince had felt the attractions of American history; even then he had noted some blemishes in the attempts thus far made to write it; and later, during his residence in Europe, he had become conscious of the ambition to give his life to its pursuit: "In my foreign travels I found the want of a regular history of this country everywhere complained of, and was often moved to undertake it; though I could not think myself equal to a work so noble as the subject merits. . . . And yet I had a secret thought that, upon returning to my native country, in case I should fall into a state of leisure, . . . I would attempt a brief account of facts at least, in the form of annals."² But the pastorship of a great church in Boston was not a state of leisure; and it was not until eighteen years had passed, after his return to New England, that he was able in any measure to gratify his cherished passion. In 1736, he gave to the public the first volume of his "*Chronological History of New England, in the Form of Annals*,"—the most genuine and the most meritorious piece of historical work published in America up to that date.

¹ The Prince Library is now in the careful and generous custody of the Boston Public Library. An admirable catalogue of it has been published under the superintendence of Justin Winsor, Boston, 1870.

² "*Chron. Hist. N. E.*" Pref. ii.

His plan was to write a history somewhat in the manner of Archbishop Usher's *Annals*; the principal features being exactness, brevity, and a statement of events in the order of time: an austere scheme, both for writer and for reader, "comprising only facts in a chronological epitome, to enlighten the understanding," and repelling all "artificial ornaments and descriptions to raise the imagination and affections."¹

He was a devotee to historical accuracy, a knight-errant of precise and unadorned fact, an historical sceptic before the philosophy of historical scepticism was born: "I would not take the least iota upon trust, if possible; I examined the original authors I could meet with."² "Some may think me rather too critical; others that I relate some circumstances too minute. . . . As for the first, I think a writer of facts cannot be too critical. It is exactness I aim at, and would not have the least mistake if possible pass to the world."³ "In short, I cite my vouchers to every passage; and I have done my utmost, first to find out the truth, and then to relate it in the clearest order. I have labored after accuracy; and yet I dare not say that I am without mistake; nor do I desire the reader to conceal any he may possibly find. But on the contrary I offer this work to the public view, that it may be perused with the most critical eye, that every error may be discovered, and the correction published."⁴

Such was his attitude toward historical accuracy. Now let us see what was his attitude toward historical fairness. In another noble passage of self-revelation, he says: "As to impartiality, I know it is usual for the writers of history to assert it, some in their prefaces, others in the front of their works; some in the strongest terms, who have been notoriously guilty of the contrary; and I am apt to think that many are partial who are insensible of it. For myself,

¹ "Chron. Hist. N. E." Dedication.

² *Ibid.* ix.

³ *Ibid.* Pref. iv.

⁴ *Ibid.* xi.

I own I am on the side of pure Christianity; as also of civil and religious liberty, and this for the low as well as high, for the laity as well as the clergy; I am for leaving every one to the freedom of worshipping according to the light of his conscience; and for extending charity to every one who receives the gospel as the rule of his faith and life; I am on the side of meekness, patience, gentleness, and innocence. And I hope my inclination to these great principles will not bias me to a misrecital of facts, but rather to state them as I really find them for the public benefit."¹

In carrying out his plan of writing the history of his own country, it seemed to him right to present it in its relations to the precedent history of all the world; for he held that the story of New England was not some isolated and forlorn chapter in the appendix of the book of time, but an integral part of that book, bound up in a volume with the rest in logical and chronological sequence: "It may be grateful to many readers to see the age of the world when this part of the earth came to be known to the other; and the line of time, with the succession of the principal persons, events, and transactions, which had been running on from the creation to the settlement of this country by a colony from England."² Accordingly, with great pains and great accuracy, and upon a close study of all the leading systems of chronology, as well as of all the original authors in Hebrew, Greek, and Roman history, he proceeds to give the succession of the world's great events, from Adam, "year one, first month, sixth day," down to the accession of James the First of England, year sixteen hundred and three, third month, twenty-fourth day. At last, having completed this immense introduction, which has its utility, but involved a sad miscalculation of the time at his disposal, and likewise proved to be a porch of inordinate size for his unfinished edifice,

¹ "Chron. Hist. N. E." Pref. x.

² Ibid. Introd. i.

he reaches the chronology of New England, of which the first part extends from the accession of James the First to the settlement of Plymouth, December the thirty-first, 1620; and the second part, from that date to events in New England history as late as August the fifth, 1633.¹

Throughout the work he is faithful to his promise of giving only nude facts, spurning all embellishments. His entries are made in the hard and compact form of a register, absolutely unimaginative and unemotional; yet as he reaches certain great epochs of history, he seems unable to keep back at least a sentence throbbing with suppressed feeling, or darting with the thrust of a sarcasm. Sometimes, indeed, this parenthetical sentence broadens into a paragraph, and breathes the music of a temperate and fine eloquence. Thus, when about to usher in the discovery of America, he gives himself pause, and says: "We are now to turn our eyes to the west, and see a new world appearing in the Atlantic Ocean, to the great surprise and entertainment of the other. Christopher Columbus or Colonus, a Genoese, is the first discoverer. . . . He becomes possessed with a strong persuasion that in order to balance the terraqueous globe and proportion the seas and lands to each other, there must needs be formed a mighty continent on the other side, which boldness, art, and resolution would soon discover. . . . Ferdinand and Isabella, . . . after five years' urging, are at last prevailed upon to furnish him with three ships and ninety men for this great enterprise; which, through the growing opposition of his fearful mariners, he at length accomplishes, to his own immortal fame and the infinite advantage of innumerable others."²

¹ His first volume abruptly closed at Sept. 7, 1630, on warning from the printer that, if he went further, it would become "too unsizable;" and the remainder of his fragment, comprising three numbers, was afterward published in pamphlets. These are reprinted in 2 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. VII. 289-295; also in S. G. Drake's ed. of "*Chron. Hist. N. E.*" 1852.

² "*Chron. Hist. N. E.*" *Introd.* 78.

As he draws near to the time of the settlement of New England, he again stops, and takes a long view, and draws a long breath: "Having passed through the seven great periods of time from the creation to the beginning of the British empire, with the discovery of that Indian shore which is soon to be the theatre of our Chronology, a new face of things appears both to the western parts of Europe and the eastern of America. . . . Divers attempts are made to settle this rough and northern country; first by the French, . . . and then by the English, and both from mere secular views. But such a train of crosses accompany these designs of both nations, that they seem to give it over as not worth the planting; till a pious people of England, not there allowed to worship their Maker according to his institutions only, . . . are spirited to attempt the settlement."¹ "So there were just one hundred and one who sailed from Plymouth in England; . . . and this is the solitary number who for an undefiled conscience and the love of a pure Christianity, first left their native and pleasant land, and encountered all the toils and hazards of the tumultuous ocean, in search of some uncultivated region in North Virginia, where they might quietly enjoy their religious liberties, and transmit them to posterity, in hopes none would follow to disturb or vex them."²

Passages like these, occurring in the midst of long and arid patches of chronological registration, have a sweet and stirring tone; yet the predominant effect of the book is depressing. The publication of it was a disappointment and a failure. A long list of subscribers had shown their interest in the inception of his great work: few had any interest to show in its continuance. Of course the author was discouraged. Nearly twenty years passed by before he had the heart to go on with his task; and then age, illness, public occupations, were too heavy upon him.

¹ "Chron. Hist. N. E." Part I. 1-3.

² *Ibid.* 86.

Nevertheless, even as a fragment the "Chronological History of New England" is the most scholarly piece of literary work wrought in America during the colonial time; and in the particular sphere of historical writing, it represents not only a great advance upon all that had been achieved among us before its time, but the true method, and the prophecy, of all that was to be achieved among us afterward.

V.

In 1739, three years after the publication of the great historical treatise of Thomas Prince, appeared an historical brochure, which deserves remembrance for the worthy quality of its work, and as a token of the spread among us of genuine methods of historical inquiry. This is "An Historical Discourse" by John Callender,¹ minister of the First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island. It is a careful and well-written sketch of the history of Rhode Island for the first century of its existence; and is especially notable for its fine antiquarian spirit, for its catholicity of tone, and for the poise and amenity with which the author refers to those painful facts in the early history of Massachusetts that had, in fact, produced the early history of Rhode Island. His prevalent magnanimity of statement gives greater edge and power to his occasional references to the intolerance which had once embittered human life in the elder commonwealth: "In reality the true grounds of liberty of conscience were not then known or embraced by any sect or party of Christians. . . . So that it was not singular or peculiar in those people at the Massachusetts to think themselves bound in conscience to use the sword of the civil magistrate to open the understandings of heretics. . . . These were not the

¹ Born 1707; graduated at Harvard 1723; minister at Newport from 1731 till his death in 1748; his "Historical Discourse" was written in 1738; printed in 1739; reprinted in R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll. IV. 45-176.

only people who thought they were doing God good service, when smiting their brethren and fellow-servants. All other Christian sects acted generally as if they thought this was the very best service they could do to God, and the most effectual way to promote the gospel of peace, and prove themselves the true and genuine disciples of Jesus Christ—of Jesus Christ, who hath declared his kingdom was not of this world, who had commanded his disciples to call no man master on earth, who had forbidden them to exercise lordship over each other's consciences.”¹

VI.

A work which has made for itself a prominent place in the literature of this period, and which, through the notice taken of it by Adam Smith, has been lifted into some European celebrity, is the “Summary, Historical and Political, of . . . the British Settlements in North America.”² Its author was William Douglass, a Scotsman, who, after an ample training in medicine at Leyden and at Paris, came to Boston in 1718, he being then about twenty-seven years of age. In Boston he established himself as a physician; and there he died in 1752. He was a man of large but heterogeneous knowledge, and blessed with a sovereign confidence in himself and his own opinions; and being also dogmatic, intolerant, of quick temper and boundless energy, fiery as a friend, still more fiery as an enemy, fond of strife, glib in speech, with a passion for rushing into print, his life was one prolonged and blissful warfare with all persons whom he could pick a quarrel with,—chiefly, his own professional brethren, likewise the clergy, the magistrates, and the successive governors of the colony.

He had great sagacity and shrewdness, and a pitiless

¹ The Discourse, in R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll. IV. 70-71.

² Published in 2 vols. Boston, 1748-1753.

way of dissecting fashionable enthusiasms and prejudices; a keen, racy, original diction; infinite courage in utterance. In a land still dominated by Calvinistic orthodoxy, he avowed himself a rationalist, saying that "the wise and thinking part of mankind" had at last learned "to regulate themselves by natural religion only."¹ He praised David Brainerd as "a true and zealous missionary," but said that allowances must be made for "his weak, enthusiastic turn of mind."² He condescended to call the apostle Eliot a good man, but added that it was a sheer waste of labor for him to translate the Bible into the language of a petty tribe of Indians who could not read and were soon to be extinct.³ In the midst of the devout raptures of the people over Whitefield's preaching, Douglass coolly computed the marketable value of the time spent by them in listening to this "vagrant enthusiast," and announced that every exhortation of Whitefield in Boston, by diverting laborers from the work by which they supported their families, was a damage to that town to the extent of about a thousand pounds sterling. No sphere of life was safe from his intrusions; no topic escaped the puncture of his criticisms; he was always ready to proclaim his opinions; and even when those opinions failed to be justified by events, he had a Falstaffian assurance in standing by them still, and a Falstaffian wit in covering up the awkwardness of his discomfiture. For example, on account of his hostility to the men at that time in power, he publicly ridiculed the New England expedition for the capture of Cape Breton, declaring that the scheme was a folly, and would be a failure; and when, in due time, the news came that Cape Breton had been captured, he was not in the least disconcerted, merely remarking that he was entirely right in his conjectures, but that "fortune would always wait upon blunderers and quacks."⁴

The larger part of mankind seemed to be alike in this,

¹ "Summary," I. 438.

² Ibid. II. 117.

³ Ibid. I. 172.

⁴ J. Thacher, "Am. Med. Biography," I. 256.

that they were the objects of his contempt; none more so than the practitioners of medicine in New England in his time: "In our plantations, a practitioner, bold, rash, impudent, a liar, basely born and educated, has much the advantage of an honest, cautious, modest gentleman. In general the physical practice in our colonies is so perniciously bad, that excepting in surgery, and some very acute cases, it is better to let nature under a proper regimen take her course, . . . than to trust to the honesty and sagacity of the practitioner. Our American practitioners are so rash and officious, the saying in . . . Ecclesiasticus . . . may with much propriety be applied to them: 'He that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall into the hand of the physician.' Frequently there is more danger from the physician than from the distemper. . . . But sometimes, notwithstanding of malpractice, nature gets the better of the doctor, and the patient recovers. Our practitioners deal much in quackery and quackish medicines, as requiring no labor of thought or composition, and highly recommended in the London quack-bills—in which all the reading of many of our practitioners consists. . . . In the most trifling cases they use a routine of practice. When I first arrived in New England, I asked . . . a noted, facetious practitioner, what was their general method of practice. He told me their practice was very uniform: bleeding, vomiting, blistering, purging, anodyne, and so forth; if the illness continued, there was 'repetendi;' and finally 'murderandi;' nature was never to be consulted or allowed to have any concern in the affair. What Sydenham well observes, is the case with our practitioners: 'Æger nimiâ medici diligentia ad plures migrat.'"¹

As an illustration of the amusing audacity of quacks in the English colonies, he also cites a medical advertisement, in which, among other nostrums, the doctor announces "an elegant medicine to prevent the yellow fever

¹ "Summary," II. 351-352.

and dry gripes in the West Indies;" and this, Douglass thinks, is only to be equalled by a similar advertisement published in Jamaica, immediately after an earthquake had done great destruction there. The physician offered to the public "pills to prevent persons or their effects suffering by earthquakes."¹

During all the long warfare of his career in New England, William Douglass kept his pen constantly wet with ink, producing newspaper articles, pamphlets, medical books; and it was but natural that a man of his versatile and irrepressible activity should try his hand upon what he called history. The book which we have already mentioned, and for which Douglass is now principally remembered, is the evidence of this. He sincerely believed it to be history; and with an amusing unconsciousness of his own traits, he ascribes to himself nearly all the qualities of a great historian, scarcely one of which he was in possession of: "I have no personal disregard or malice, and do write of the present times as if these things had been transacted a hundred years since."² On the contrary, he was nothing if not partisan and malignant; and his reports of contemporaneous events are saturated with the fury of contemporaneous passions. In truth, he is not an historian at all; he lacks the calmness of history, its disinterestedness, its caution and reserve, its thoroughness, its accuracy, its nobility of expression. His style is hurried, slipshod, irregular; his materials jumbled together in the hotchpotch manner; he flits from topic to topic as the gust strikes him; with all his asserted intellectual humility, he delights to exhibit his polyglot proficiency, and covers his pages with specks of quotation from foreign languages, especially Latin and French. He is essentially a journalist and pamphleteer. He is hot, personal, caustic, capricious; and his history is only a congeries of pungent and racy editorial paragraphs.

¹ "Summary," II. 352, note.

² *Ibid.* I. 356.

On the first page of the first volume of his "Summary," he announces his plan for making the book interesting: "Descriptions and bare relations, although accurate and instructive, to many readers are insipid and tedious; therefore a little seasoning is used. Where a 'mica salis' occurs, may it not be disagreeable: it is not designed with any malicious, invidious view. For the same reason, a small digression, but not impertinent to the subject, is now and then made use of; as also some short illustrations." As the history proceeds, he abundantly fulfils his promise of putting "a little seasoning" into the insipid dish of plain narrative—the seasoning of egotistic and sarcastic personalities. Moreover, he constantly acts as the chorus to his own play; he stops its movement, in order to explain something, to justify his method, to express the hope that he is not getting tedious, or to regret that he is violating his intended brevity, and that he is "prolix," and that his summary "swells too much." His favorite literary method is digression; and he employs it so frequently that when he does chance to revert to historical narration, the latter seems a sort of lapse from the main purpose of the book. But, as usual with him, finding this method convenient to himself, he stanchly defends it as the only proper one: "This Pindaric or loose way of writing ought not to be confined to lyric poetry; it seems to be more agreeable by its variety and turns, than a rigid, dry, connected account of things."¹

Perhaps his most readable passages are the foot-notes, which are very numerous, and are reservoirs for his private opinions—if he can be said to have had any—his whims, hobbies, and hostilities. He is also very droll in such passages of the text as contain his reasons for not devoting himself to a minute and wearisome study of original authorities upon American history. Thus, on approaching the history of New England, and on surveying the vast extent and complexity of the subject, he relieves himself by the fol-

¹ "Summary," I. 310.

lowing comical preliminary groan of indignant criticism: "This is a laborious affair, being obliged to consult manuscript records. The many printed accounts are: 1. Too credulous and superstitious. 2. Too trifling. Must the insipid history of every brute . . . or man-animal be transmitted to posterity? 3. The accounts of every white man and Indian mutually killed or otherwise dead, would swell and lower history so much as to render the perusal of such histories (excepting with old women and children) impracticable. 4. The succession of pious pastors, elders, and deacons in the several townships, parishes, or congregations I leave to ecclesiastic chronologers; canonization or sainting seems not consistent with our Protestant principles. 5. The printed accounts in all respects are, beyond all excuse, intolerably erroneous."¹

Whether right or wrong in his opinions, he is never wanting in explicitness in stating them. He has a multitude of petted animosities,—the Indians, the French, the Reverend George Whitefield, the Bishop of Cloyne and that prelate's nostrum of tar-water, paper-money, and so forth; and whenever, in the zigzag progress of his discourse, he catches a glimpse of any of these detested objects, he discharges at them the slugs and hot-shot of his vituperation.

As for the Indians, "excepting speech, which is natural to mankind, they seem to have been only a gregarious sort of man-brutes; that is, they lived in tribes or herds and nations, without letters, or arts further than to acquire the necessaries of life;" and until the white men came to America and brought it into connection with the civilized world, "America and the moon were much upon the same footing with respect to Europe, Asia, and Africa."²

As for the French, they "are the common nuisance and disturbers of Europe, and will in a short time become the same in America, if not mutilated at home, and in America fenced off from us by ditches and walls, that is,

¹ "Summary," I. 361-362.

² *Ibid.* 116.

by great rivers and impracticable mountains. . . . Their promises and faith are by them used only as a sort of scaffolding, which, when the structure is finished, or project effected, they drop. In all public treaties they are 'gens de mauvaise foi.'"¹

As for the Reverend George Whitefield, he is "an insignificant person, of no general learning, void of common prudence. His journals are a rhapsody of Scripture-texts and of his own cant expressions. . . . The strength of his arguments lay in his lungs. . . . He and his disciples seemed to be great promoters of impulses, ecstasies, and wantonness between the sexes. Hypocritical professions, vociferations, and itineracies, are devotional quackery."²

As for the Bishop of Cloyne, he "was an enthusiast in many affairs of life, not confined to religion and the education of youth. He invaded another of the learned professions, Medicine. . . . He published a book called 'Siris, . . . or Tar-Water.' . . . He ought to have checked this officious genius (unless in his own profession-way he had acquired this nostrum by inspiration) from intruding into the affairs of a distinct profession."³

As for paper-money, it is the "fallacious and designed cheat of a plantation government,"⁴ an "iniquitous or base money currency,"⁵ an "accursed affair."⁶ "I desire readers . . . may excuse prolixity; when this vile chimera or monster comes in my way, I cannot contain myself."⁷

Upon the whole, William Douglass may be said to have succeeded in his attempt at being amusing, if not at being instructive. His book contains an enormous mass of miscellaneous but untrustworthy information relating to America and the rest of the world; and our present interest in it is chiefly due to its representation of the author himself; who, certainly, was a very definite, positive, original, and self-centred person, never the echo or the shadow of one.

¹ "Summary," I. 2-3.

² Ibid. II. 141-142.

³ Ibid. I. 149-151.

⁴ Ibid. I. 310.

⁵ Ibid. I. 334.

⁶ Ibid. II. 13.

⁷ Ibid. I. 499.

CHAPTER XV.

NEW ENGLAND: THE PULPIT IN LITERATURE.

- I.—Continued ascendancy of the clergy—Their full maintenance of the grand traits of their predecessors,—manliness, scholarship, thoughtfulness, eloquence—Their improvement upon their predecessors in breadth, and in social and literary urbanity.
- II.—John Higginson—Sketch of him by John Dunton—The power of his character and of his long life—His election-sermon—His “Attestation” to the “Magnalia.”
- III.—William Stoughton, preacher and statesman—His “Narrative of the Proceedings of Andros”—His discourse on “New England’s True Interest not to Lie”—Its literary ability—Its courage.
- IV.—Urian Oakes—His greatness in prose as well as in verse—Contemporaneous estimates of him—His first artillery-sermon—Its great eloquence—Its delineation of the Christian soldier—His election-sermon—His second artillery-sermon.
- V.—Samuel Willard—His “Complete Body of Divinity”—His career—His theological lectures—Their great influence—Their publication in 1726 in the first American folio—Strong qualities of the book.
- VI.—Solomon Stoddard—His activity as a writer—His special reputation for soundness of judgment—His “Answer to Some Cases of Conscience respecting the Country”—The sinfulness of long hair and of periwigs—Condemnation of other frivolities.
- VII.—Benjamin Colman—His great contemporaneous influence in church and state—His fine culture—His residence in England—His particular friendships there—His return to Boston—His long and prosperous public career—His discourses—Their literary polish—His charitable spirit.
- VIII.—John Barnard of Marblehead—His versatile culture—His eminence—His intellectual traits—His volumes of sermons—His gentlemanly treatment of sinners.
- IX.—Jonathan Edwards—Outline of his life—His qualities, spiritual and intellectual—His precocity in metaphysics, and in physics—His juvenile writings—His more mature studies in science—His spiritual self-discipline—His resolutions—The sorrows of his life—Habits as a student and thinker—His power as a preacher—Analysis of his method in discourse—“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”—His literary characteristics.
- X.—Mather Byles—A scene in Hollis Street Church early in the Revolution—His brilliant career before the Revolution—His versatility—The mis-

fortune of his later reputation as a jester—A great pulpit-orator—His literary qualities—His exposition of the preacher's character—His favorite themes—Passages from his sermons.

XI.—Jonathan Mayhew—The lines of his influence—Estimate of him by John Adams—Charles Chauncey—His traits—His hatred of inaccurate and emotional utterance—His contempt for Whitefield—His discourse on "Enthusiasm"—His "Seasonable Thoughts"—His portrait of the enthusiast.

I.

IN our progress over the various fields of literature in New England during the colonial time, we encounter not one form of writing in which we are permitted to lose sight of the clergy of New England,—their tireless and versatile activity, their learning, their force of brain, their force of character. But we are now to resume our study of their writings in the field that was peculiarly their own,—that of theological and religious exposition.

As we have already seen, the immigrant clergy of New England—the founders of this noble and brilliant order—were, in nearly all qualities of personal worth and greatness, among the greatest and the worthiest of their time, in the mother-country,—mighty scholars, orators, sages, saints. And by far the most wonderful thing about these men is, that they were able to convey across the Atlantic, into a naked wilderness, all the essential elements of that ancient civilization out of which they came; and at once, to raise up and educate, in the new world, a line of mighty successors in their sacred office, without the least break in the sequence, without the slightest diminution in scholarship, in eloquence, in intellectual energy, in moral power.

It cannot be doubted, indeed, that the great divines of the immigrant period—those heroic pastors who led forth their flocks into the American forests and founded here a new empire—had in that very fact an enormous historical advantage over their successors in the ministry,—an inapproachable prestige and renown. Nevertheless, a study of all the writings produced by the New England clergy,

from the years of the settlement to the years of the Revolution, cannot fail to convince us that the men who came after the Founders were as great as they: nay, that while in any particulars the sons and the sons' sons equalled the Fathers, in some particulars they outdid them; they fully maintained all the strong and lofty traits of the first generation—manliness, scholarship, thoughtfulness, eloquence, purity—and even added to these traits, those of intellectual breadth, of secular culture, of social and literary urbanity.

II.

In the year 1686, John Dunton of London paid a visit to Salem, and there saw the senior minister of that place, the aged John Higginson. "All men look on him," wrote Dunton,¹ "as a common father; and on old age for his sake as a reverend thing. He is eminent for learning, humility, charity, and all those shining graces that adorn a minister. His very presence and face puts vice out of countenance. He is now in his eightieth year, yet preaches every Sunday; and his conversation is a glimpse of heaven." This benign old man was then just ten years younger than Dunton stated; but after that, he lived just twenty-two years, the last of the New England pioneers, the father of all the faithful, manifesting to the end the sweetness and strength of character that covered with unwonted majesty his patriarchal years.

In 1629, a year before Boston was founded, he had come to Salem, a boy of thirteen, with his father, Francis Higginson; he had received his education in the new world: after many years of service as school-master and preacher in Connecticut, he had returned to Salem, in 1659; and there he remained the rest of his days, in charge of the church that his father had founded. He had great authority in all the land—the authority of goodness, of wisdom,

¹ "Life and Errors of J. Dunton," I. 127-128.

and of ability. His earliest publication is the election-sermon of 1663, entitled "The Cause of God and his People in New England;" a sturdy effort to check what seemed to him the torrent of worldliness and wealth-seeking there, by recalling to the people the purpose for which they and their fathers had founded New England: "If any man amongst us make religion as twelve and the world as thirteen, let such an one know he hath neither the spirit of a true New England man nor yet of a sincere Christian."¹ It is a sermon that has the impressiveness imparted by a clear, earnest, consecrated mind; but is without special literary superiority. His other publications, seven in number, are all upon religious topics, either expository or historical; the most notable being his "Attestation" to the "Magnalia," dated 1697, and printed as one of the prefaces of that book. Many sentences of this production are very noble; having especially some of the antique qualities of thought and style that were then dying out of English prose,—massiveness of meaning, confidence in the invisible goodness and truth, unconsciousness of cynicism, a seer-like earnestness of tone, the quaint diction of dead sages and saints, a gravity and reverberating fullness of phrase, the expectation of intellectual fortitude in those who read.

III.

During the last thirty years of the seventeenth century, William Stoughton was a conspicuous statesman of New England,—his great wealth, talent, learning, dignity, and public spirit, winning for him a large measure of the public confidence. He held, at various times, all the great offices in the commonwealth; and it was his misfortune to be chief-justice in the fatal time of the witchcraft delusion. Unfortunately, his own cool judgment was utterly over-

¹ The Sermon, II.

borne in that epidemic of fury and of folly; and he became a protagonist among the persecutors. The pitiless and gratuitous savagery of his acts as a magistrate, toward those innocent and helpless creatures who fell under a public accusation half malignant and half lunatic, have smirched his noble name with uncleansable dishonor.

He had in him the power to make for himself a great place in American letters; but he spent his principal force in outward affairs. Graduated at Harvard in 1650, at the age of nineteen, and afterward fellow of New College, Oxford, he began his public career as a minister; and having in that profession acquired much reputation, he passed out of it into politics. Two specimens of his ability as a writer have come down to us, representing the two fields of sacred and secular activity to which in succession he devoted his life. The later and inferior specimen is "A Narrative of the Proceedings of Andros," published in 1691,¹—a clumsy and dull performance. The earlier and better specimen is, indeed, one of the landmarks of literature in New England for that time,—the election-sermon preached by him in Boston, in 1668. It bears the striking title, "New England's True Interest, not to Lie." A powerful document it must have been, in its day; eloquent after the fashion of those times; conservative in thought, able in statement; courageously confronting New England with its high obligations to God and to itself, and accusing it of a drift toward shameful degeneracy in morals, piety, and manners; and it contains one sentence that has become classic among us. The doctrine of the discourse, he first expounds in the minute and technical style of the seventeenth century sermon-builders; and as usual, the chief interest is reserved for the application. Here, he charges the people of New England with an extraordinary responsibility,—a responsibility de-

¹ Included also among the reprints known as the "Andros Tracts," 3 vols. Boston, 1868-1874.

rived from their own extraordinary character. They were picked men, he tells them; selected by God himself out of the common herd of mortals: "God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grain over into this wilderness."¹ Hence, "it is a solemn conviction and charge against us to have it spoken, as it must be spoken in the name of the Lord this day, O New England, thy God did expect better things from thee and thy children; not worldliness and an insatiable desire after perishing things; not whoredoms and fornications; not revilings and drunkenness; not oaths and false swearings; not exactions and oppressions; not slanderings and backbitings; not rudeness and incivility—a degeneracy from the good manners of the Christian world; not formality and profaneness, to loathe manna, to despise holy things, to grow sermon-proof and ordinance-proof; not contentions and disorders; not an itching after new things and ways; not a rigid Pharisaical spirit; not a contempt of superiors; not unthankfulness and disrespect to instruments of choice service; not a growing weary of government, and a drawing loose in the yoke of God; not these things, but better things, O New England, hath thy God expected from thee."²

IV.

In our study of the verse-writers of New England, we have already met with Urian Oakes, whose "Elegy upon the Death of Thomas Shepard" we found to be among the few examples of genuine poetry produced in America in the colonial time. But his principal activity was as a sermon-writer; and in that capacity he had no superior among us during the seventeenth or the eighteenth century. For once, Cotton Mather's fancifulness struck the happy note in naming him "the Lactantius of New Eng-

¹ The Sermon, 19.

² Ibid. 20.

land ;"¹ and when, in another place, this same provincial pedant declared that Urian Oakes "was an Orpheus that would have drawn the very stones to discipline,"² he only smothered under an antic hyperbole the long-cherished tradition concerning those marvellous fascinations of living speech, which were wielded by the Cambridge pastor, and which did not perish even when uttering themselves in the cold oratory of print. I find in him an alert and forcible intelligence, civility, cosmopolitan range ; an expression, affluent, nervous, flexible ; a condensed energy of phrase ; the epithets that are born of original and poetic insight ; the gift of culminating and bright statement, crystallizing into epigram.

It was in 1672, the first year after the return of Urian Oakes from his long residence in the mother-country, that he was selected to give the annual sermon³ before the artillery company of Boston,—an association composed of the first gentlemen in the colony, and intended to cherish here the chivalric traits of military discipline and honor. In speaking to such an audience, the orator naturally took as his theme the parallelisms existing between the true soldier and the true Christian. Here his rhetoric has a martial movement ; his sentences ring like bugle-notes. There is high exhilaration—the dauntless ecstasy of heroism and triumph—in the words with which he sets forth the attributes of the warrior of Christ : "He is a man of war from his birth. Neither is he a poor naked creature ; . . . but he comes into the new world in his suit of armor, armed 'cap-a-pie,' with a complete armor of proof, being vested with the graces of the spirit of Christ. He hath his excellent and invincible General, . . . and hath taken his 'sacramentum militare,' his oath of fidelity and obedi-

¹ "Magnalia," II. 124.

² Ibid. 116.

³ This was printed at Cambridge 1674, and bore a title characteristic of the age rather than of the man : "The Unconquerable, All-conquering, and more than Conquering Soldier."

ence to the great Lord General. He hath also . . . his company that he is listed into. . . . He hath his banner to fight under. . . . He hath his arms and weapons, offensive and defensive, to fight withal. He hath his soldierly qualifications and military accomplishments,—courage, skill, patience, hope of victory, faithfulness to . . . his General, orderliness, disposition to endure hardship, or whatever else may be mentioned, . . . a soldier well appointed . . . to dispute it out with any adversary.”¹

Then, too, as every good man is a soldier, so, by a sad antithesis, is every bad man a soldier likewise; “but he fights against God, strengthens himself and stretches out his hand against the Almighty. . . . He puts on the whole armor of the Devil, that he may be able to stand against all the shocks of conscience, or encounters of the word and spirit of God, and fight it out to the last with the Infinite Majesty, to the everlasting ruin of his immortal soul.”² In the long, bitter battle which is waging here, they who are Christ’s men find that their enemy, “the world, can put on two faces, and change its countenance as occasion serves. If feigned, flattering smiles will not do, then killing frowns shall, if it be possible.”³ But, indeed, this will not be possible; for Christians “may be opposed, combated, and contended withal, but never routed, run down, totally defeated, or overthrown.”⁴ “Death may kill them but cannot conquer them.”⁵ And the supreme moment for all Christian soldiers is, of course, that endless one, which comes after the fierce campaigns of earth are over, and when they pass under triumphal arches to the repose of victory in heaven. They “have fought their fight, and finished the course of their warfare, and are . . . out of push of pike or gunshot, far enough removed out of the reach of their adversaries. They are marched out of the field, and discharged from any further service, and enjoying their reward.”⁶

¹ The Sermon, 5.

² Ibid. 2.

³ Ibid. 5.

⁴ Ibid. 16.

⁵ Ibid. 9.

⁶ Ibid. 4.

It is not strange that the new pastor of Cambridge, having made so thrilling and masterly an oration at the great military anniversary of the colony, should have been summoned to be the orator at its next great political anniversary. Accordingly, in 1673, we find him giving the election-sermon, taking as his subject the moral perils that then hung over New England. He entitled his discourse, "New England Pleaded With;"¹ a brave and manly exposition of the evil tendencies then developed there,—formality, spiritual listlessness, immorality, irreverence, worldliness, greed of wealth, sensualism, love of display in dress, vanity, ostentation. As a literary effort, this discourse is not so brilliant as the artillery-sermon; has not so many majestic and resounding passages; but it is very searching, pungent, and strong, and must have produced a vast impression as its invectives first leaped, in passionate and pathetic tones, from the lips of the prophet, and glanced down among a people most sensitive to such accusations. There are in it also some sentences of broad scope, worthy to become national aphorisms. This is one: "It is the property of Englishmen, much more of religious Englishmen, and should be most of all of religious New-Englishmen, to be tenacious and tender of their liberties."²

Four years afterward, this matchless preacher stood forth again as the orator of the artillery-company, giving them a sermon on "The Sovereign Efficacy of Divine Providence."³ Addressing the foremost military organization in the country, and reviewing the havoc and agony of the war just closed with the Indians under Philip, he confesses his humiliation, that with all their own military training and their various other superiorities, they could have been so terrified and so injured by such enemies; but he warns his fellow-countrymen of obligations even more sacred than those of a soldier, and of a hostility even more

¹ Printed, Cambridge, 1673.

² The Sermon, 50.

³ Printed in 1682, after the author's death, with a preface by John Sherman.

terrible than that of the red men: "New England hath enemies enough on earth and in hell; woe to us if we make God in heaven our enemy also."¹

V.

In the year 1726, the men of books in New England noted with considerable exultation, as a sign of national progress, the issue from an American printing-press, of a huge folio volume,—the largest that had ever been printed in this country. It bore this well-deserved title, "A Complete Body of Divinity." Within its nine hundred and fourteen pages,—each page having two columns in small and compact type,—it held "two hundred and fifty expository lectures on the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," all written out and delivered in order by one busy man, during a period of nineteen years. That man was Samuel Willard, himself, like his book, a body of divinity; a man of inexpressible authority, in those days, throughout all the land. He was born in 1640, in the woods of Concord; in 1659 he was graduated at Harvard; he was settled in the ministry, first at Groton, and then at the South Church, Boston; he opposed the witchcraft persecutions; he succeeded Increase Mather in the presidency of Harvard College, adding that service to his work as pastor; all his lifetime, he was most fruitful in religious writings, printed and unprinted; and he died in 1707. At his funeral, Ebenezer Pemberton, his colleague, stood up and spoke of him, as one "who had been for so long a time the light, joy, and glory of the place," and whose death was "an awful rebuke of heaven upon this whole land."

Nineteen years before his death, he began to give at his own church, on Tuesday afternoons, once a month, an elaborate lecture on theology. His was a mind formed for theological method. He did not desire to impose

¹ The Sermon, 40.

upon himself or upon any one a slavish submission to a theological system; he only wished to get for himself and others the clearness and vigor and practical utility that come from putting one's most careful ideas into orderly combination. He was a theological drill-sergeant. He was also a truly great divine. In the lectures upon systematic theology, which he thus began in 1688, and continued unflinchingly till he died, his object was to move step by step around "the whole circle of religion." The fame of his lucid talks on those great themes, soon flew abroad, and drew to him a large, permanent audience of the learned and the unlearned; and after his death, theological students and others kept clamoring for the publication of those talks. In 1726, all such persons were gratified.

"A Complete Body of Divinity" is a vast book, in all senses; by no one to be trifled with. Let us salute it with uncovered heads. The attempted perusal of all these nine hundred and fourteen double-columned pages, was, for many a theological scholar of the last century, a liberal education—and a training in every heroic and heavenly virtue. Along the pages of the venerable copy that I have used—the copy which Jeremiah Dummer, of the Middle Temple, London, sent over in 1727 as a gift to Yale College—I find fading memorials of the toil, and aspiration, and triumph, with which numerous worthy young divines of the last age grappled with the task of reading the book through; but on the blank leaf at the end, are only two inscriptions of final victory: "Lyman perlegit, 1742," and "Timothy Pitkin perlegit, A.D., 1765." Doubtless, both these heroes have long since had their reward, and have entered into rest, which they sorely needed; and the others perished by the way.

The thought and expression of this literary mammoth are lucid, firm, close. The author moves over the great spaces of his subject with a calm and commanding tread, as of one well assured both of himself and of the ground he walked on. His object seemed to be, not merely to

enlighten the mind, but to elevate the character and the life; and whenever, in the discussion of a topic, he has finished the merely logical process, he advances at once to the practical bearings of it, and urges upon his hearers the deductions of a moral logic, always doing this earnestly, persuasively, and in a kingly way. The whole effect is nutritious to brain and to moral sense; and the book might still serve to make men good Christians as well as good theologians—if only there were still left upon the earth the men capable of reading it.

VI.

SOLOMON STODDARD was born in Boston, in 1643, his father being an eminent merchant and politician of that city, and his mother a sister of Sir George Downing. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1662, and was settled in the ministry at Northampton from 1669 until his death in 1730: a man of reverend look, strong judgment, industry, learning, uncommon logical faculty; "for some years the most aged minister in the province, . . . a Peter here among the disciples and ministers of our Lord Jesus, very much our primate and a prince among us."¹ He seems not to have published anything until he was past fifty years of age; but from that time onward, his publications were numerous, in the form of sermons, controversial pamphlets, and treatises relating to theology and to personal conduct. His mental vision was a singularly clear one; and persons enveloped in various sorts of theological and ethical fog, were much inclined to depend on his superior eyesight. Thus, in 1722, he published a little book called "An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience respecting the Country;" wherein he solves ten great questions appertaining to New England casuistry. Some of these ques-

¹ Benjamin Colman, Sermon on Death of Stoddard, quoted in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 174.

tions are: "What right doth belong to the Sabbath?" "At what time of the evening doth the Sabbath begin?" "Did we any wrong to the Indians, in buying their land at a small price?" "Is it lawful for men to set their dwelling-houses at such a distance from the place of public worship that they and their families cannot attend it?" Above all, "Is it lawful to wear long hair?" Upon this latter agitating theme, the excellent Mr. Stoddard has no uncertainty. The thing "seems utterly unlawful. . . . It is a great burden and cumber; it is effeminacy and a vast expense, . . . a moral evil. . . . It was a part of the calamity that came upon Nebuchadnezzar that his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."¹ But the ingenuity of Satan is tireless; and being routed in the argument concerning long hair, he suggests to the depraved minds of men that, even if they must crop their heads close, they may still cover them up with periwigs: therefore, "Is it lawful to wear periwigs?" "I judge there is abundance of sin in this country in wearing periwigs. Particularly in these two things: First, when men do wear them needlessly, in compliance with fashion. Their own hair is sufficient for all those ends that God has given hair for. One man's hair is comelier than another's. . . . Some cut off their own because of the color—it is red or gray; some because it is straight; and some only because it is their own. Secondly, when those that may have just occasion to wear them, do wear them in such a ruffianly way as it would be utterly unlawful to wear their own hair in. Some of them are of an unreasonable length; and generally they are extravagant as to their bushiness. . . . The practice seems to me to have these four evils in it: 1. It is an uncontentedness with that provision that God has made for men. . . . When God has given to men such hair as is suitable to answer the ends of hair, it seems to be a despising of the goodness of God to cut it off, in com-

¹ "An Answer," etc. 4-5.

pliance with a vain fashion. 2. It is wastefulness. . . . 3. It is pride. . . . 4. It is contrary to gravity. . . . This practice makes them look as if they were more disposed to court a maid than to bear upon their hearts the weighty concerns of God's kingdom."¹ "There be many other practices that are plainly contrary to the light of nature. Hooped petticoats have something of nakedness; mixed dances are incentives to lust; computations in private houses is a drunken practice."²

VII.

For nearly the entire first half of the eighteenth century, there was in Boston a minister of one of its churches, Benjamin Colman, who, by an exquisite union of strength and tenderness, the tact of the politician, the sincerity of the saint, the magical and captivating might of the orator, held an unsurpassed ascendancy over his contemporaries. He was organized to be a conqueror of his kind, through their brains and their hearts. In person above the common height, delicate in shape, of fair complexion, with the dress and bearing of an accomplished gentleman, he had a "peculiar flame and dignity in his eye;" his presence instantly unlocked all minds as by something benign, graceful, and venerable. Some of his associates, who outlived him, and who wrote the introduction to his biography that appeared two years after his death, say that no written description can convey an idea of his personal charm and power, either in private or in public. They speak of his conversation as "admirably polished and courtly;" of his incomparable eloquence in the pulpit; of his earnestness and refinement; the inimitable power and sweetness of his elocution; the ardor of his imagination; the rapture of his impassioned and devout speech. As a clergyman, there were utilities in his life that reached far

¹ "An Answer," etc. 6-7.

² *Ibid.* 15.

beyond those usually exerted by those in his profession; and in times of need, he was a pillar of state. Passing his days in an atmosphere charged with theological sullenness and acrimony, he was both orthodox and charitable; his personal breadth burst the hoops of his creed; he was human first, and clerical afterward.

His education was a wise and happy one—the education of books and of life. He was born in Boston, in 1673; was graduated at Harvard, in 1692; and after three years of theological study, with some real work as a preacher, he set out for Europe, intending to gain wisdom by looking upon the wisdom of the world. It was a time of war between England and France; and on the voyage, his ship was captured by a French privateer, after a hard battle, during which the pale young preacher fought bravely on deck among the bravest. Being made a prisoner, he was clothed in rags, thrown into the hold among the sailors, taken to France, and suffered there most barbarous treatment during a captivity of several weeks. At last, he was exchanged; he made his way to England, where he remained four years. He was heartily welcomed there by the most eminent of the dissenting clergymen; went much into society; preached with great acceptance at Cambridge, Bath, and elsewhere; and had many inducements to remain permanently in the mother-country. He was a particular favorite in the family of Sir Henry Ashurst, with whose daughter he appears to have conducted, for a time, a gentle and clerical flirtation. This young lady once desired him to write for her a poem; and in response to her commands, he produced some playful verses called “A Quarrel with Fortune,” wherein, comparing her to a taper and himself to a fly, he intimates his own peril in fluttering so near a damsel of her exalted rank:

“So have I seen a little, silly fly,
Upon a blazing taper dart and die.
The foolish insect, ravished with so bright
And fair a glory, would devour the light.

At first, he wheels about the threatening fire,
 With a career as fleet as his desire ;
 This ceremony past, he joins the same,
 In hopes to be transformed, himself, to flame ;
 The fiery, circumambient sparkles glow,
 And vainly warn him of his overthrow,
 But resolute he'll to destruction go.
 So, mean-born mortals, such as I, aspire,
 And injure, with unhallowed desire,
 The glory we ought only to admire.
 We little think of the intense, fierce flame,
 That gold alone is proof against the same ;
 And that such trash as we, like drossy lead,
 Consume before it, and it strikes us dead."¹

Subsequently, in England, he became the victim of a far deeper and more serious passion. During his residence in Bath, he first met a beautiful and accomplished young woman, Elizabeth Singer of Frome, who, under the pseudonym of "Philomela," was just then beginning to attract notice by her poems, and who afterward, rejecting the suit of Matthew Prior, married one Thomas Rowe, and had a somewhat distinguished career as a writer, both of prose and of verse. Colman's acquaintance with this brilliant woman soon became very intimate and interesting; had he been willing to remain in England, it is said that he could have married her; and the memory of the passionate friendship thus formed with her, cast a tint of romance over the remainder of his life, passed beyond the sea. Long after his return to America, he continued his correspondence with her; and even so late as 1708, her letters to him manifest ardent emotion: she called him her "guardian angel;" said that only "the language of heaven" could express "a friendship so noble" as theirs; and assured him that, after death, her friendship for him should "commence a more exalted ardor."²

Postponing, however, the consummation of this friend-

¹ E. Turell, *Life of B. Colman*, 24-25.

² *Ibid.* 49.

ship to the leisure to be expected in paradise, Benjamin Colman returned, in 1699, to the more urgent vocation that awaited him in Boston, where he took charge of a new church founded on a somewhat liberal platform; serving it with preëminent success as long as he lived, nearly half a century; solacing himself, meantime, for the temporary loss of the society of his English Philomela, by three very excellent American wives.

During this long public career, his contributions to the literature of his country were most abundant, and mainly in the form of sermons. His style, in these sermons is fluent, polished, modern in tone, Addisonian, with a rich and ample movement. He had formed his literary manner by the study of English literature, and in his sermons he often refers to the masters of English pulpit-eloquence,—to Bishop Pearson, to John Howe, to “the late excellent Archbishop Tillotson,” whom he calls “that most reverend person, the greatest example of charity and moderation that the age produced.”¹ His discourses abound in terse and felicitous terms. He speaks of “the dreggy, cheap pleasures of sin;” he says that the worldling acts as if he “esteemed himself only of the upper order of brutes, to graze with and perish like them.” Describing the power of religion to adorn the body: “I once saw a poor old man in this country, who made no figure but for his piety, who seemed, already on his death-bed, to have changed his wrinkled face for Moses’s shining one; and I am sure, were the vainest persons by, in all their tawdry ornaments of body as well as real beauty, they would have looked but uncomely and deformed compared with this venerable man.” Describing the spiritual warfare of the Christian, he says: “Men must wrestle against the importunities of flesh and blood, and against the power and policy of hell; against the cravings of a vitiated nature fomented by the world and the devil.”²

¹ “Discourses upon the Parable of the Ten Virgins,” 57.

² *Ibid.* 90–91.

There is a manly and sweet catholicity of tone in his writings,—a unique quality then: "It is indeed best to err on the charitable side; and no temper is more hateful than a censorious, jealous, judging one; suspecting everybody of evil but ourselves and a few we are fond of; confining the Church of Christ to a narrow compass, and salvation to those only of our own persuasion. . . . There are some practices and principles that look catholic, which, though I cannot reason myself into, yet I bear a secret reverence to in others, and dare not for the world speak a word against. Their souls look enlarged to me; and mine does so the more to myself, for not daring to judge them."¹

VIII.

A man of heroic mould both in body and in mind—one of the clerical Titans of our later colonial period—was John Barnard, who, in the year 1770, at the age of eighty-nine, died at Marblehead, after sixty-eight years of service as a preacher in New England, after fifty-six years of service as a preacher in that particular town. Tall, of graceful proportions, erect even under the burden of nearly ninety years, he had the imperial bearing of our elder New England clergy, the stateliness of a king, touched by the intellectuality of a scholar, and the tenderness of a saint. "His countenance was grand," wrote his associate, William Whitwell, "and his mien majestic; and there was a dignity in his whole deportment. . . . His presence restrained every imprudent sally of youth; and when the aged saw him, they arose and stood up."²

After taking his first degree at Harvard College in 1700, he devoted himself, at his father's house in Boston, to a wide range of studies in preparation for the Christian min-

¹ "Discourses upon the Parable of the Ten Virgins," 56-57.

² Funeral Sermon by W. Whitwell, quoted in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 254.

istry; he began preaching, in 1701; he did some good service for his country as a military chaplain, in 1707; he paid a visit to England, in 1709, remaining there sixteen months; and at last, in 1714, ripened by multifarious contact with life and with books, he began his pastorate at Marblehead; where he advanced year by year to a commanding reputation throughout the country. His great trait was energy, physical and mental, impelling him to the mastery of all human knowledge. He had the usual scholarly attainments in the ancient languages; he was able to deal with the most subtile and rugged problems in Biblical criticism and in divinity; all his life, he pursued the study of the higher mathematics, for which he had peculiar aptitude; he was an expert in the theory and practice of music; he gave great attention to architecture; and living in a town where the building and sailing of ships were the principal employments of the people, he astonished them by his knowledge of their own mysteries, and was able to serve them by the execution of the most artistic and improved models for ships.

His intellectual activity, shown in so many other directions, was shown also in authorship. He published, in 1752, a metrical version of the Psalms; he wrote, in 1768, a sketch of the eminent ministers he had known in New England; and besides numerous isolated sermons, he issued, in 1727, a volume entitled "Sermons on Several Subjects," and in 1747, another volume entitled "The Imperfection of the Creature and the Excellency of the Divine Commandment."

The foremost impression now made upon one by these writings, is that of the robustness, the intellectual virility, of the man. He delights in hardy tasks of thought; he has the habit of confronting real difficulties of the mind. There is a mathematical thoroughness, a lawyer-like sense, in his handling of sacred subjects; he grips them with the clutch of conscious power. His great gift lies in his logic. He excels in the argumentative presentation and defence

of Christian doctrine. Yet, having first dealt with his topic as a thing in debate, and having vindicated the reasonableness of his cause, he casts off severity of style and often becomes in expression ample, glowing, and affluent.

It marks the literary culture of the man, that in his writings one sees traces of his familiarity not only with Calvin and the great Puritan divines, but with the more liberal writers of the Anglican church, such as Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and More;¹ and that he should even enforce his statements by the authority of Epictetus.² Though his style is by no means a rich or imaginative one, it is never beggarly or harsh; at times, it has a tone of delicate grace, the artful force of amenity in phrase; as, when he speaks of one who "hath made some progress in the mysterious art, the divine lesson, of self-denial;"³ or when he asks: "Is there anything more unbecoming a rational creature than to be a slave to sense, or than for a heaven-born soul to be the Devil's drudge?"⁴ "A man may very much stifle and suppress the remonstrances of his own mind by the hurry and noise and diversions of the world; but can he always command silence in his own breast, and stop the just clamors of conscience against himself?"⁵ He has a felicity of urbane statement, sometimes even a quiet sarcasm, which blend effectively with the vigor of stern denunciation; but always this preacher is a gentleman, even in his frankest professional arraignment of sinners.

IX.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, the most original and acute thinker yet produced in America, was born at East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1703; was graduated at Yale College in 1720; was a preacher in New York for about eight months prior to April, 1723; was a tutor in Yale College

¹ "Sermons on Several Subjects," 11, 38, 40, 41, 42, 120.

² Ibid. 91.

³ Ibid. 90. ⁴ "The Imperfection of the Creature," etc. 230. ⁵ Ibid. 231.

from the summer of 1724 until the summer of 1726; in 1727, became pastor of the church at Northampton, and so continued until 1750; from 1751 until 1758, was missionary to the Indians near Stockbridge; on the sixteenth of February, 1758, was installed as president of the College of New Jersey; and died a few weeks afterward, namely, on the twenty-second of March.

Both by his father and by his mother, he came of the gentlest and most intellectual stock in New England. In early childhood, he began to manifest those powerful, lofty, and beautiful endowments, of mind and of character, that afterward distinguished him,—spirituality, conscientiousness, meekness, simplicity, disinterestedness, and a marvellous capacity for the acquisition of knowledge and for the prosecution of independent thought. It is, perhaps, impossible to name any department of intellectual exertion, in which, with suitable outward facilities, he might not have achieved supreme distinction. Certainly, he did enough to show that had he given himself to mathematics, or to physical science, or to languages, or to literature—especially the literature of imagination and of wit—he would have become one of the world's masters. The traditions of his family, the circumstances of his life, the impulses derived from his education and from the models of personal greatness before his eyes, all led him to give himself to mental science and divinity; and in mental science and divinity, his achievements will be remembered to the end of time.

As a mere child, he read not only the ordinary writings in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, but the most abstruse and subtle writings in English; and at the age of fourteen, being then a sophomore in Yale College, his eye, for the first time, fell upon Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding,"—a book which made an era in the history of his mind, and which he read, even at that youthful period, with a delight greater, he tells us, "than the most greedy miser finds when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold

from some newly discovered treasure.”¹ Several years before that event, however, he had trained himself always to read with pen in hand ; that is, to be productive as well as receptive in reading, and not only to think for himself as he went along, but to put his thinking into exact language. The result of such training as that upon such genius as his, was a precocity, both in original thought and in the expression of it, that is perhaps not surpassed, if it is equalled, in the case of any other intellectual prodigy.

Thus, when Jonathan Edwards was not more than twelve years old, he heard that some one in the neighborhood, probably an older boy, had advanced the opinion that the soul is material and remains with the body till the resurrection. Instead of debating the question in crude, antagonistic fashion, our young metaphysician wrote to his friend a playful letter, in which he ironically professes to be on the point of adopting the new opinion, and humbly submits for solution a few difficulties that still stood in his way, but that really constituted a most ingenious and effective exposure of the logical absurdities of the doctrine proposed: “I am informed that you have advanced a notion that the soul is material, and attends the body till the resurrection. As I am a professed lover of novelty, you must imagine I am very much entertained by this discovery ; which, however old in some parts of the world, is new to us. But suffer my curiosity a little further. I would know the manner of the kingdom before I swear allegiance. First, I would know whether this material soul keeps with [the body] in the coffin ; and if so, whether it might not be convenient to build a repository for it. In order to which, I would know what shape it is of, whether round, triangular, or four-square, or whether it is a number of long fine strings reaching from the head to the foot ; and whether it does not live a very discontented life. I am afraid when the coffin gives way, the earth will fall in and

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 30.

crush it. But if it should choose to live above ground, and hover about the grave, how big it is; whether it covers all the body, or is assigned to the head, or breast, or how. If it covers all the body, what it does when another body is laid upon it; whether the first gives way, and, if so, where is the place of retreat. But suppose that souls are not so big but that ten or a dozen of them may be about one body, whether they will not quarrel for the highest place; and as I insist much upon my honor and property, I would know whether I must quit my dear head, if a superior soul comes in the way. But, above all, I am concerned to know what they do where a burying place has been filled twenty, thirty, or an hundred times. If they are a top of one another, the uppermost will be so far off that it can take no care of the body. I strongly suspect they must march off every time there comes a new set. I hope there is some other place provided for them but dust. The undergoing so much hardship and being deprived of the body at last, will make them ill-tempered. I leave it with your physical genius to determine whether some medicinal applications might not be proper in such cases; and subscribe your proselyte—when I can have solution of these matters.”¹

This discussion by two New England boys, of a profound and complex problem in psychology, is interesting as an illustration of the educational effects wrought on the people of New England, by their rugged theological drill. They had become a population of acute philosophers. Even their children, it seems, were ready to interrupt the delights of playing at tag or of capturing woodchucks, in order to exchange arguments over the question of the materiality of the human soul. We see, also, in the present example, some of the chief peculiarities of the mind of Jonathan Edwards,—his keenness in analysis, his faculty of seeing the logical absurdities involved in a false propo-

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 20-21.

sition, his power of setting forth these absurdities in a way at once fair and irresistible, his gift of raillery, his freedom from arrogance of tone, his use of the Socratic strategy of a deferential manner in debate.

While still an under-graduate, and therefore before his eighteenth year, he began to put into precise shape, in his note-book, the conclusions he had come to on leading topics in mental philosophy,—such as cause, existence, space, substance, matter, thought, motion, union of mind with body, consciousness, memory, personal identity, duration, and so forth. In one of these notes, on “The Place of Minds,” he comes back to that sharp study of the nature and physical relations of the spirit that had employed his mind some years before: “Our common way of conceiving of what is spiritual, is very gross, and shadowy, and corporeal, with dimensions, and figure, and so forth. If we would get a right notion of what is spiritual, we must think of thought, or inclination, or delight. How large is that thing in the mind which they call thought? Is love square, or round? Is the surface of hatred rough, or smooth? Is joy an inch, or a foot, in diameter? These are spiritual things; and why should we then form such a ridiculous idea of spirits, as to think them so long, so thick, or so wide, or to think there is a necessity of their being square, or round, or some other certain figure?”¹

In another of these juvenile notes, he thus discusses “Nothing”: “That there should absolutely be Nothing at all, is utterly impossible. The mind, let it stretch its conceptions ever so far, can never so much as bring itself to conceive of a state of perfect Nothing. It puts the mind into mere convulsion and confusion, to think of such a state; and it contradicts the very nature of the soul, to think that such a state should be. It is the greatest of contradictions, and the aggregate of all contradictions, to say that Thing should not be. It is true, we cannot so

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 678.

distinctly show the contradiction in words; because we cannot talk about it, without speaking stark nonsense, and contradicting ourselves at every word; and because Nothing is that whereby we distinctly show other particular contradictions. . . . If any man thinks that he can conceive well enough how there should be Nothing, I will engage that what he means by Nothing, is as much Something, as anything that he ever thought of in his life; and I believe that if he knew what Nothing was, it would be intuitively evident to him that it could not be. . . . Absolute Nothing is the aggregate of all the contradictions in the world: a state, wherein there is neither body, nor spirit, nor space, neither empty space nor full space, neither little nor great, narrow nor broad, neither infinite space nor finite space, not even a mathematical point, neither up nor down, neither north nor south. . . . When we go about to form an idea of perfect Nothing, we must shut out all these things; . . . nor must we suffer our thoughts to take sanctuary in a mathematical point. When we go to expel being out of our thoughts, we must be careful not to leave empty space in the room of it; and when we go to expel emptiness from our thoughts, we must not think to squeeze it out by anything close, hard, and solid; but we must think of the same that the sleeping rocks do dream of; and not till then, shall we get a complete idea of Nothing."¹

It is in these wonderful memoranda, penned by this lad of sixteen or seventeen, that we find his first avowal of that philosophy of Idealism, with which the name of Berkeley has since been associated. At the end of an argument respecting "Being," Jonathan Edwards says: "What, then, is to become of the universe? Certainly, it exists nowhere but in the Divine mind. . . . Those beings which have knowledge and consciousness are the only proper, and real, and substantial beings; inasmuch as the being of

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 706-707.

other things is only by these. From hence we may see the gross mistake of those who think material things the most substantial beings, and spirits more like a shadow; whereas spirits only are properly substance."¹ In another note, he says: "The material universe exists only in the mind. . . . All material existence is only idea."²

The precocity of Jonathan Edwards in physical science, appears to have been not less wonderful than was his precocity in metaphysical science. His father had a correspondent, probably in England, who was much interested in natural history; and for this gentleman, Jonathan Edwards, when twelve years of age or perhaps younger, wrote an elaborate paper, giving with great exactness of statement, and with great force of reasoning, the results of his own observations upon spiders. "May it please your Honor," writes this modest and marvellous boy, "There

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 708.

² Ibid. I. 676. Some of the sentences that I have quoted to illustrate Edwards's early avowal of Idealism, are also quoted by Professor A. C. Fraser (Works of Berkeley, IV. 182), to illustrate his statement that "Jonathan Edwards, the most subtle reasoner that America has produced," was "an able defender of Berkeley's great philosophical conception in its application to the material world." On another page (ibid. 190), Professor Fraser adds, that Berkeley's "direct influence is now, however, hardly to be found in the history of American thought, though his philosophy was professed by two of the greatest American thinkers, Samuel Johnson and Jonathan Edwards." It is certain that Johnson derived his Idealism from Berkeley, and in consequence of Berkeley's visit to America; and the impression likely to be made by Professor Fraser's words, is that the same was the case with Edwards. But this is by no means certain. The above sentences from Edwards, avowing Idealism, were written nine or ten years before Berkeley came to America. Moreover, Edwards was not the man to conceal his intellectual obligations; and the name of Berkeley nowhere occurs, so far as I can discover, in all the ten volumes of Edwards's printed writings. It seems more probable that the peculiar opinions which Edwards held in common with Berkeley, were reached by him through an independent process of reasoning and somewhat in the same way that they were reached by Berkeley, who, as Professor Fraser says (ibid. 35), "proceeded in his intellectual work on the basis of postulates which he partly borrowed from Locke, and partly assumed in antagonism to him."

are some things that I have happily seen of the wondrous way of the working of the spider. Although everything belonging to this insect is admirable, there are some phenomena relating to them more particularly wonderful. Everybody that is used to the country, knows their marching in the air from one tree to another, sometimes at the distance of five or six rods. Nor can one go out in a dewy morning, at the latter end of August and the beginning of September, but he shall see multitudes of webs, made visible by the dew that hangs on them, reaching from one tree, branch, and shrub to another. . . . But these webs may be seen well enough in the daytime by an observing eye, by their reflection in the sunbeams. Especially, late in the afternoon may these webs that are between the eye and that part of the horizon that is under the sun, be seen very plainly, being advantageously posited to reflect the rays. And the spiders themselves may be very often seen travelling in the air, from one stage to another amongst the trees, in a very unaccountable manner. But I have often seen that which is much more astonishing. In very calm and serene days in the forementioned time of year, standing at some distance behind the end of an house or some other opaque body, so as just to hide the disk of the sun and keep off his dazzling rays, and looking along close by the side of it, I have seen a vast multitude of little shining webs, and glistening strings, brightly reflecting the sunbeams, and some of them of great length, and of such a height that one would think they were tacked to the vault of the heavens, and would be burnt like tow in the sun. . . . But that which is most astonishing is, that very often appears at the end of these webs, spiders sailing in the air with them. . . . And since I have seen these things, I have been very conversant with spiders, resolving if possible to find out the mysteries of these their astonishing works. And I have been so happy as very frequently to see their manner of working; that when a spider would

go from one tree to another, or would fly in the air, he first lets himself down a little way from the twig he stands on by a web; . . . and then laying hold of it by his fore-feet, and bearing himself by that, puts out a web . . . which is drawn out of his tail with infinite ease, in the gently moving air, to what length the spider pleases; and if the farther end happens to catch by a shrub or the branch of a tree, the spider immediately feels it, and fixes the hither end of it to the web by which he lets himself down, and goes over by that web which he put out of his tail." He then describes minutely how the spider moves from tree to tree; and how, in the fall of the year, they sustain themselves in the air and are carried upon the westerly winds to the sea, and are "buried in the ocean, and leave nothing behind them but their eggs for a new stock next year."¹

The interest of Jonathan Edwards in physical science did not pass away with his childhood; and while a student at Yale College, and especially while a tutor there, he prosecuted his physical researches with great diligence. He even wrote a series of notes on natural science, intended as the basis of a book. In these notes, he dealt with the principal topics in physics and astronomy, many of his remarks being very acute, ingenious, and original. He suggested that "there is in the atmosphere some other ethereal matter considerably rarer than atmospheric air;" that water is a compressible fluid—a fact not publicly announced by scientific men until thirty years afterward; that water in freezing loses its specific gravity; and that "the exist-

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 23-28. The manuscripts from which these extraordinary specimens of juvenile thought and expression are printed, were in the possession of Sereno E. Dwight, when editing the works of Edwards; and are described by him as in "handwriting of the earliest and most unformed cast;" the essay relative to the materiality of the soul being "without pointing or any division into sentences," and having "every appearance of having been written by a boy just after he had learned to write." *Ibid.* 20.

ence of frigorific particles" is doubtful. In explaining the phenomena of thunder and lightning, without any knowledge of the electric fluid, and long before the invention of the Leyden jar, he rejected the notions then prevalent upon the subject, and came nearer to the theory afterward discovered by Franklin than any other human mind had then done. He made important suggestions relative to a theory of atoms; he demonstrated that the fixed stars are suns; he explained the formation of river-channels, the different refrangibility of the rays of light, the growth of trees, the process of evaporation, and the philosophy of the lever; and he made important observations on sound, on electricity, on the tendency of winds from the coast to bring rain, and on the cause of colors.¹

The intense intellectual discipline to which, almost from infancy, this wonderful person subjected himself, was accompanied by a moral and spiritual discipline, begun as early in life, and in its rigor equally intense. In the "resolutions" that he wrote out for himself while a very young man, one now finds, amid many tokens of the gratuitous and puerile severity of his age and his sect, the traits of a personal character full of all nobility: "To live with all my might while I do live;" "When I feel pain, to think of the pains of martyrdom and of hell;" "Never to do anything out of revenge;" "In narrations, never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity;" "Never to give over nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be."² On the twenty-third of September, 1723, he wrote: "I observe that old men seldom have any advantage of new discoveries, because they are beside the way of thinking to which they have been so long used. Resolved, if ever I live to years, that I will be impartial to hear the reasons of all pretended discoveries, and receive them if rational, how long soever I have been used to another way of think-

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 53-54; 702-761.

² Ibid. 68-72.

ing.”¹ About one month afterward, he wrote: “To follow the example of Mr. B., who, though he meets with great difficulties, yet undertakes them with a smiling countenance, as though he thought them but little; and speaks of them, as if they were very small.”² On the sixth of June, 1724, while a tutor at Yale, he wrote: “I have now abundant reason to be convinced of the troublesomeness and vexation of the world, and that it never will be another kind of world,”³—an observation confirmed, doubtless, by the experience of many another Yale tutor, since that date.

Such, in intellectual attainments and in spiritual quality, was Jonathan Edwards, when, at the age of twenty-four, he entered upon his work as minister of a parish on the frontiers of civilization. The remainder of his life was what he expected it to be,—an experience of labor and of sorrow; but always borne by him with meek and cheerful submission. He had ill health, domestic griefs, public misrepresentation, alienation of friends, persecution, even poverty. In 1751, he was so poor that his daughters had to earn money for household expenses by making fans, laces, and embroidery; and he himself, for lack of paper, had to do his writing, mostly on the margins of pamphlets, on the covers of letters, and on the remnants that his daughters could spare him from the silk-paper used by them in the manufacture of fans.

Nevertheless, through it all, he bated not a jot of heart or hope, but still bore up and steered right onward. His chief business was in his study; and there he usually worked thirteen hours a day. Even out of the study, his mind was not at rest; when, for exercise, he rode on horseback, or walked in the woods, he kept on at his tasks of thought; in order that he might not forget anything that he had wrought out in these excursions, he was accustomed to pin a bit of paper upon his coat, for

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 94.

² Ibid. 100.

³ Ibid. 103.

every idea that was to be jotted down on his return; and it was noticed that, sometimes, he would come home with his coat covered over with these fluttering memorials of his intellectual activity.

The problems upon which his mind was constantly at work, were the great problems of theology,—especially those in immediate debate, at that time, in New England. Of course, he held the theology that was then and there orthodox,—that ganglion of heroic, acute, and appalling dogmas commonly named after John Calvin. To the defence of that theology, in all its rigors, in all its horrors, Jonathan Edwards brought his unsurpassed abilities as a dialectician.

We need not discredit the traditions that have come down to us, of the agonizing effects produced upon men and women, by such an advocate as he, giving statement to such doctrines as those. He was not an orator. In the pulpit, he generally held his little "manuscript volume in his left hand, the elbow resting on the cushion or the Bible, his right hand rarely raised but to turn the leaves, and his person almost motionless."¹ Yet such was the power of his sincerity, of his solemnity, and of his logic, that he wrought results not surpassed in their kind even by the oratory of Whitefield. His first sermon at Princeton, in the College Hall, was two hours long; but it so enchained the audience that they were astonished and disappointed that it closed so soon. One person, who heard him preach concerning the Day of Judgment, testified that "so vivid and solemn was the impression made on his own mind, that he fully supposed that, as soon as Mr. Edwards should close his discourse, the Judge would descend, and the final separation take place."² Once, at Enfield, Connecticut, he came into an assemblage that was unusually listless and indifferent; but before his sermon was ended, the people were bowed down in agony

¹ S. E. Dwight, *Works of J. Edwards*, I. 605-606.

² *Ibid.* 604.

and terror. "There was such a breathing of distress and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people, and desire silence that he might be heard."¹

The sermon through which he so moved the people of Enfield, had this terrifying title, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God;" and an analysis of his method in that discourse, will serve to show us enough of his method in all his discourses. It is upon the text, "Their feet shall slide in due time." After a concise and solemn exposition of the original use of the words, he deduces from them this proposition: "There is nothing that keeps wicked men, at any one moment, out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God." He then proceeds to justify the proposition by a series of ten considerations, each stated with great sharpness and force, and all accumulating upon this central thought an indescribable emphasis: 1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. 2. They deserve to be cast into hell. 3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation. 4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. 5. The Devil stands ready to fall upon them and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. 6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints. 7. It is no security to wicked men, for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. 8. Natural men's care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, does not secure them a moment. 9. All wicked men's pains and contrivance to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, do not secure them from hell one moment. 10. God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment.²

¹ Works of J. Edwards, I. 605.

² Ibid. VII. 163-168.

These several considerations follow, one after another, with dreadful swiftness and force, each hurled by calm, merciless logic, and by an overwhelming intensity of realism. He then reaches the application, where the urgency of reasoning, of menace, of consternation, becomes intolerable. No wonder that human nature gave way under it; that men and women sighed and sobbed, as the ghastly preacher, himself trembling at his own argument, went on and on with the horrible thing: "If God should let you go, you would immediately sink, and sinfully descend, and plunge into the bottomless gulf. . . . Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light, to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. . . . And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope."¹

His power over the people whom he addressed, consisted partly in his minuteness of imaginative detail,—bringing forward each element in the case one by one; so that drop after drop of the molten metal, of the scalding oil, fell steadily upon the same spot, till the victim cried out in shrieks and ululations of agony: "The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being drunk

¹ Works of J. Edwards, VII. 169.

with your blood.”¹ “The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; . . . he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. . . . You are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful, venomous serpent is in ours.”² “You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder.”³ “If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that, he will only tread you under foot. And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that; but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt; no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.”⁴

In the latter part of his life, Jonathan Edwards chanced to open and to read so frivolous a book as a novel—“*Sir Charles Grandison*.” The delight that he found in that work, led him to analyze the sources of his pleasure, and especially to consider the power of mere style in the expression of thought; and to say to his son that he regretted his own neglect of it. As a theologian, as a metaphysician, as the author of “*The Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will*,” as the mighty defender of Calvinism, as the inspirer and the logical drill-master of innumerable minds in his own country, and in Great Britain, he, of course, fills a large place in ecclesiastical and philosophical history. But even from the literary point of view, and in spite of his own low estimate of his literary merits, he deserves

¹ Works of J. Edwards, VII. 170.

² Ibid. 171.

³ Ibid. 170.

⁴ Ibid. 173.

high rank. He had the fundamental virtues of a writer, —abundant thought, and the utmost precision, clearness, and simplicity in the utterance of it; his pages, likewise, hold many examples of bold, original, and poetic imagery; and though the nature of his subjects, and the temper of his sect, repressed the exercise of wit, he was possessed of wit in an extraordinary degree, and of the keenest edge. In early life, he was sadly afflicted by the burden of checking the movements of this terrible faculty; but later, it often served him in controversy, not as a substitute for argument, but as its servant; enabling him, especially in the climaxes of a discussion, to make palpable the absurdity of propositions that he had already shown to be untenable.¹

X.

In the year 1776, shortly after the evacuation of Boston by the British troops, a somewhat dramatic scene was presented one day, in one of the churches of that city, known as the Hollis Street Church. Its patriotic members, having returned from the outlying villages to which they had fled the year before, had determined to come to stern issues with their pastor, the Reverend Mather Byles, a distinguished and powerful divine, but an incorrigible Tory, then just seventy years old. All along, from the opening of the controversy between the colonies and the king, he had taken sides with the king against the colonies. Although in the pulpit he never, in those days, referred to politics, out of the pulpit he referred to little else; and he made unsparing use of his acuteness and of his sarcastic wit, to baffle and scourge the political designs of his own people. During the occupation of the city by the king's soldiers, he had remained there, and had given them his aid and comfort; and he still affronted his congregation by praying, in their presence, for the prosperity of the monarch whose troops had desolated the town, had

¹ A notable instance of his wit in logical ridicule, is his exposure of the absurdity of Chubb's notion of "an act." *Works of J. Edwards*, II. 109-200.

slaughtered their brethren, and were preparing to enslave the whole country. For forty-three years, Mather Byles had ministered to that one church, faithfully, ably, with great renown;¹ yet they could endure his political perversity no longer. Resting their public accusations against him, however, on his faults as a pastor, and not on his faults as a patriot, they drew up their charges in writing, and notified him of their wish for a public interview upon the subject. On the day appointed, the male members of the congregation, with grim resolution, yet with no little dread of the awful eye and the no less awful tongue of the great man who had been their spiritual lord so long, assembled early at the church. The pews had been removed by the troops from the floor of the house; and perhaps with a mute sense of greater safety in the approaching interview, the men took their seats in one of the lofty galleries, and there awaited in silence the arrival of the mighty person, whose wrath they were about to invoke upon themselves. "In due time," says the son² of one who witnessed the scene, "the door opened slowly, and Dr. Byles entered the house with an imposing solemnity of manner. He was dressed in his ample, flowing robes and bands, under a full bush-wig that had been recently powdered, surmounted by a large three-cornered hat. He walked from the door to the pulpit with a long and measured tread, ascended the stairs, hung his hat upon the peg, and seated himself. After a few moments, he turned with a portentous air toward the gallery, where his accusers sat, and said,—'If ye have aught to communicate, say on.'" Upon this, one of the deacons, a very little man with a very little voice, stood up and began to read: "The church of Christ in Hollis Street"—"Louder!" roared the frowning orator, with awful, leonine voice. The puny deacon

¹ He was born in Boston in 1706, graduated at Harvard in 1725, ordained pastor of Hollis Street church in 1733.

² Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 380-381.

began again, and with still greater effort of articulate squeak: "The church of Christ in Hollis Street"—"Louder!" once more shouted the preacher, with terrible emphasis. The miserable little man, now trembling with fright as well as with great stress of vocal impotence, began once more, and was permitted to proceed through three or four of the specifications, when the insulted pastor arose, indignation darkening all his face and giving dreadful resonance to his voice, and thundered out,—"'Tis false; 'tis false; 'tis false; and the church of Christ in Hollis Street knows that 'tis false." Upon this, he took down his hat, put it upon his head, and descending the pulpit, as an angry monarch would his throne, he stalked proudly out of the church, never to enter it again; leaving to the little deacon and his brethren, the contemptuous privilege of making the most of their specifications against him.

Thus, in great bitterness of popular aversion, ended the public career of a man, who, until his loyalty to his king made him disloyal to his country, had held a very high place in the admiration of his contemporaries. To them he had seemed a man of extraordinary brilliance, in many different characters,—wit, poet, man of letters, theologian, pulpit-orator; but it was as pulpit-orator only that he was really great, to the service of that single character subordinating whatever gifts he possessed for all the others.

The traditions of his wit have, since then, choked out nearly all memory of the central gravity and strength of his character; and he stands in our history merely as a Tory punster and a clerical buffoon. His jocoseness, after all, was not the principal part of him. He jested much; and yet he was much more than a jester; he was an earnest and devout Christian minister.¹

His great strength was in the pulpit. He was perhaps

¹ A collection of the jests of Mather Byles may be made from the following sources: William Tudor, "Life of James Otis," 156-160; "The Belknap Papers," in 5 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. II. 285, 471; III. 51, 234; W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 377, 378, 382.

as great a master of the amenities and the potencies of pious persuasion as New England had in its colonial age, after the days of Hooker, Shepard, John Cotton, and Urian Oakes. His presence was stately and commanding; he was at once aristocrat and apostle; in dress and manner, one of the first gentlemen of his time. Very early in life, he had shown a propensity to purely literary work; he was in correspondence with some of the chiefs of literature in England; Pope sent to him a splendid copy of his translation of the *Odyssey*. His own literary facility was notable: he had poetic sensitiveness, an ear for the strokes and cadences of the Popean verse; no inconsiderable facility in the manufacture of that verse; all of which, without making him more than a minor poet, gave him uncommon skill in the modulation of his prose sentences for oratory. His sermons are invariably marked by neatness of phrase, and expertness in the manipulation of his materials; by fresh and striking views of things, by the avoidance of uncomfortable length, by courtesy of tone, by common sense. He had paid much attention to the æsthetics of his profession. His own idea of "a finished minister" included all the accomplishments, both of society and of books. The preacher, he said, should be a person of "graceful deportment, elegant address, and fluent utterance. He must study an easy style, expressive diction, and tuneful cadences. . . . Nothing can be more finished oratory than many of Paul's sermons. . . . Rattling periods, uncouth jargon, affected phrases, and finical jingles—let them be condemned; let them be hissed from the desk and blotted from the page."¹ The old Puritan traditions of the enormous studiousness of the preacher, were sanctioned by this preacher—at least in the impartation of advice to others: "The study of the minister is the field of battle. Here he plays the hero, tries the dangers of war, and repeats the toils of combat. . . . How

¹ Sermon at the ordination of his son, New London, 1758, 11-12

often must he watch when others sleep; and his solitary candle burn when the midnight darkness covers the windows of the neighborhood."¹ He deemed it worth his while, also, to accentuate the rather obvious ethical requirements of the sacred calling: "What an inconsistent thing is a wicked minister! An unholy divine; a blind watchman; a wolfish shepherd; an ignorant angel;—what nonsense is this! An ungodly man of God—what a solecism! what a monster!"²

The distinctive gift of Mather Byles was homiletical; he originated no ideas, he constructed no new arrangement of ideas; his function lay in the strength, warmth, and vivacity with which he grasped for himself the great familiar propositions in faith and conduct, and then, for others, held them forth in a succession of splendid and powerful pictures that inevitably drew the eyes of men, and stirred their hearts into fellowship of fervor. He smote men with the sword of their own accepted ideas; into speech he put without reserve his imagination and his emotion; he loved those generic and universal topics—ancient but never old—which exercised his own uncommon faculty of sublime and tender description: the impotence of man, the insignificance of this world, the grandeur of the eternal state, the dissonance and emptiness that are in all things whatsoever save virtue and truth and God. Repeating that melancholy, tired text,—the very hyperbole and half-truth of mortal weariness and pain,—“Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity,” the preacher, in one sermon,³ interprets it in dramatic colloquy with an imaginary disputant, and charges each word of his text with an explicit burden of gloom. At another time, he draws this picture of the physical future of his hearers: “In a few years the most beauteous and learned and pious head will grin a hideous skull. Our

¹ Sermon at the ordination of his son, New London, 1758, 14.

² Ibid. 8.

³ Funeral Sermon on Wm. Dummer, 3-4.

broken coffins will show nothing but black bones, or black mould, and worms, and filth.”¹ He pours scorn on the emptiness of all human pretension: “A creature drooping to dust, and falling into a filthy grave, to set up for strength and beauty, honor and applause! Was ever anything more absurd and ridiculous? So might an emmet crawl in state, and value itself upon its imaginary possessions, and conceited accomplishments. So might a shadow, lengthened by the setting sun, admire to find itself grown so tall, while in the same moment it was going to vanish, blended in the gathering twilight, and lost in night and darkness.”²

The Bible is the storehouse for this preacher's themes, and for much of his imagery; and his gift of description, as it exercises itself on man's pettiness, so is it put forth for the display of God's greatness. Taking up one of the Scriptural titles of God, “the Lord of hosts,” the orator proceeds to this amplification of it: “This is one of the magnificent and favorite titles which he wears; and it is about two hundred times applied to him in the inspired writings. The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory: the Lord of hosts is his name. Take a view of his extended and potent armies, and see him in his glory at the head of all. The heavenly hosts are his. So are the angels in all their shining forms and unnumbered regiments. An immeasurable front, and an endless rear! No army of so exact discipline, such invincible courage and fatal execution. Our painted troops are a mere mock-show, to these resistless legions. Our chariots and horses make no figure at all before these chariots of fire and horses of fire. The chariots of God are twenty thousand thousands of angels; and he maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire. A whole host of our mortal warriors shall wither in a night before one of them, and strew the pale camp with an hundred and four score and five thousand corpses.

¹ “The Present Vileness of the Body,” 9.

² Funeral Sermon on Wm. Dummer, 20-21.

Beneath these, the stars keep their military watch, the outguards of the celestial army. And what a glittering host of them range themselves over the blue plains of ether! . . . These in all their immense dominions are under his absolute command. . . . How mysterious and unknown are the laws of those unnumbered squadrons; and how irresistible their movements! Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? But he, the great monarch of all, commands with infinite ease; and every rolling world submits with exact obedience. . . . Below these, and sailing along our atmosphere, the clouds make their majestic appearance, a flying camp, or a moving magazine of divine artillery. . . . There the northern tempests plant their impetuous batteries; there the fierce engines of the sky play in various forms of destruction. He is alike the Lord of the terrestrial hosts, while every species of creature and every individual are under his exact command. But who can call over the list of these extended cohorts? Is there any number of his armies? The earth is full of his legions; so also is the great and wide sea, with all the tribes and colonies there. . . . And where's the creature which he cannot commission, or that dares to mutiny against his sovereign edicts? . . . Behold what a Lord of hosts is here! Even the wind and the seas obey him! He rules

'amidst the war of elements,
The wrecks of matter, and the crush of worlds.'

Even the devils are subject to him. . . . He is the Lord of our hosts; and not an army gathers in this earth without his counsels and providence. . . . He unfurls his ensigns, and calls for the march of nations in universal tumult, and ranges half the globe on a side, confederated to a decisive battle."¹

¹ Artillery-sermon for 1740, 9-14.

XI.

On the border-line, between the colonial age and the age of the Revolution, we confront two great men, Jonathan Mayhew and Charles Chauncey, who belong to both ages, and who represent, not only the vast political influence of the New England clergy in the agitations of those times, but the broadest intellectual training, the most rational and the most catholic sentiment, then reached by any of their class. These two men we shall meet again, and study more fully, when we come to the literature of the Revolution; but our record of the high and splendid intellectual development of the clergy of New England, during the colonial time, would lack some essential factors, if we did not at least point to their names and to the significance of their lives, even in the period now under view.

Jonathan Mayhew, the younger of the two, who also died first, was for the last nineteen years of his short life, minister of a church in Boston. He was, in the pulpit, a sort of tribune of the people. He impressed himself upon his contemporaries as a thinker of much originality and boldness, as a preacher of extraordinary power, as a writer of great elegance, force, and wit. In the history of his time, he stands for two things: first, the impulse he gave to bold and manly political conduct among his fellow-countrymen; and second, the impulse he gave to the emancipation of their minds from the despotism of the old theological dogmas. John Adams, who knew him well, predicted that the writings of Jonathan Mayhew would preserve his reputation "as long as New England shall be free, integrity esteemed, or wit, spirit, humor, reason, and knowledge admired."¹

In a long life, which began almost with the beginning of the eighteenth century, and did not end until the stress

¹ Works of J. Adams, IV. 29.

and peril of the American Revolution were all passed, Charles Chauncey,¹ pastor of the first church of Boston, lived among men as their natural leader. He was a man of leonine heart, of strong, cool brain, of uncommon moral strength. He bore a great part in the intellectual strife of the Revolution; but before that strife was opened, he had moulded deeply the thought of his time, both by his living speech and by his publications. These were mostly sermons; but as sermons they had an extraordinary sweep of topics, from early piety and the lessons of affliction, to earthquakes in Spain, murder, religious compulsion, Presbyterian ordination, legislative knavery, the encouragement of industry, and the capture of Cape Breton.

The prevailing trait of the man was intellectual genuineness in all things, and utter scorn of its opposite in anything. He had a massive, logical, remorseless understanding, hardy in its processes, and unwilling to take either fact or opinion at second hand. On the great themes that were then in debate among men, he put himself to enormous research. One of these themes was the Episcopacy. He gave four years of hard reading to it, first in the Scriptures and in the Fathers, then in all modern books on both sides of the controversy. Other themes were the doctrines of human depravity, retribution, and the like. He settled himself down for seven years to the study of these doctrines in the New Testament, especially in the epistles of St. Paul, and finally in all other books within reach; and he thus worked his way "into an entirely new set of thoughts"² on those matters. He was an orthodox rationalist; and he stood in the line of that intellectual development among the clergy of New England, which at a later day culminated in Unitarianism.

In the midst of the popular spasms and rhapsodies excited by the preaching of Whitefield and his imitators,

¹ Born in Boston 1705, graduated at Harvard 1721, pastor in Boston from 1727 to his death in 1787.

² "Chauncey Memorials," 70.

the peculiar qualities of Charles Chauncey were strongly revealed. He had an ineffable contempt for all slipshod, giddy, gaseous minds; for ejaculatory and rhetorical folk; for that oratory which makes up for absence of ideas by vehemence of assertion. Whitefield himself, he regarded as a clerical mountebank, ignorant, shallow, presumptuous, injurious, "never so well pleased as with the hosannas of ministers and parishioners in these parts of the earth;"¹ "the grand promoter of all the confusion there has been in the land."² To Chauncey it seemed that the people were being led by Whitefield and his kind into all manner of disorder and folly; that inevitable reaction would come, by and by, in every shape of moral disaster; and that it was the duty of every sound brain to help to check the epidemic of lunacy. With his usual thoroughness he first undertook to gather the facts; he travelled hundreds of miles to observe for himself the proceedings of the itinerants and of the people who were affected by them; and being convinced that the fruits were delusion, anarchy, self-righteousness, and all uncharitableness, he published, in 1742, a tremendous sermon entitled "Enthusiasm," and in the following year, a still more powerful treatise, entitled, "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England."

A remarkable passage in the former of these works, is his description of the enthusiast; a full-length portrait for all ages and all lands. The original being just then very conspicuous in the streets of Boston, the fidelity of this portrait must have rendered it extremely effective at that time: "The enthusiast is one who has a conceit of himself as a person favored with the extraordinary presence of the Deity. He mistakes the workings of his own passions for divine communications; and fancies himself immediately inspired by the Spirit of God, when all the while he is under no other influence than that of an over-heated imagination.

¹ "Chauncey Memorials," 65.

² *Ibid.* 68.

"The cause of this enthusiasm is a bad temperament of the blood and spirits. 'Tis properly a disease, a sort of madness. . . . None are so much in danger of it, as those in whom melancholy is the prevailing ingredient in their constitution. In these it often reigns, and sometimes to so great a degree, that they are really beside themselves, acting as truly by the blind impetus of a wild fancy, as though they had neither reason nor understanding.

"And various are the ways in which their enthusiasm discovers itself. Sometimes, it may be seen in their countenance. A certain wildness is discernible in their general look and air. . . . Sometimes, it strangely loosens their tongues and gives them such an energy, as well as fluency and volubility in speaking, as they themselves, by their utmost efforts, cannot so much as imitate when they are not under the enthusiastic influence. Sometimes, it affects their bodies, throws them into convulsions and distortions, into quakings and tremblings. . . . Sometimes, it will unaccountably mix itself with their conduct, and give it such a tincture of that which is freakish and furious, as none can have an idea of, but those who have seen the behavior of a person in a frenzy. Sometimes, it appears in their imaginary peculiar intimacy with heaven. They are, in their own opinion, the special favorites of God; have more familiar converse with him than other good men; and receive immediate, extraordinary communications from him. . . . And what extravagances, in this temper of mind, are they not capable of, and under the specious pretext too of paying obedience to the authority of God? Many have fancied themselves acting by immediate warrant from heaven, while they have been committing the most undoubted wickedness. There is, indeed, scarce anything so wild, either in speculation or practice, but they have given in to it; they have, in many instances, been blasphemers of God and open disturbers of the peace of the world. But in nothing does the enthusiasm of these persons discover itself more, than in the disregard they express to the dictates of

reason. They are above the force of argument, beyond conviction from a calm and sober address to their understandings. As for them, they are distinguished persons; God himself speaks inwardly and immediately to their souls. . . . And in vain will you endeavor to convince such persons of any mistakes they are fallen into. They are certainly in the right, and know themselves to be so. . . . They are not, therefore, capable of being argued with; you had as good reason with the wind. And as the natural consequence of their being thus sure of everything, they are not only infinitely stiff and tenacious, but impatient of contradiction, censorious, and uncharitable. . . . Those . . . who venture to debate with them about their errors and mistakes, their weaknesses and indiscretions, run the hazard of being stigmatized by them as poor, unconverted wretches, without the Spirit, under the government of carnal reason, enemies to God and religion, and in the broad way to hell. . . . The extraordinary fervor of their minds, accompanied with uncommon bodily motions, and an excessive confidence and assurance, gains them great reputation among the populace; who speak of them as men of God, in distinction from all others, and too commonly hearken to and revere their dictates, as though they really were, as they pretend, immediately communicated to them from the Divine Spirit."¹

¹ The sermon, 3-6.

CHAPTER XVI.

LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES.

I. NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY.

- I.—Traits of life in New York before it became English—After it became English—A many-tongued community—Metropolitan indications—Education neglected—Literary effort only in spasms.
- II.—Daniel Denton, a pioneer of American Literature there—His "Brief Description of New York"—His pictures of nature and of social felicity—Thomas Budd, of New Jersey, another pioneer writer—His "Good Order established in Pennsylvania and New Jersey"—William Leeds, a refugee from Philadelphia—His "News of a Trumpet sounding in the Wilderness."
- III.—Lewis Morris of Morrisania—His vivacious boyhood—Turns vagabond—Settlement into steady courses—A powerful politician—His literary inclinations—His letters from London—Provincial loyalty disenchanted by going to the metropolis.
- IV.—Cadwallader Colden—His long career—Manifold activity—Extraordinary range of his studies and of his writings—His "History of the Five Indian Nations"—Its characteristics—Its descriptions of the savage virtues.
- V.—Daniel Coxe of New Jersey—His "Description of the English Province of Carolana"—His statesmanly view of colonial affairs—Anticipates Franklin's plan of a union of the colonies.
- VI.—Jonathan Dickinson, pulpit-orator, physician, teacher, author—First president of the College of New Jersey—His personal traits—His eminence as a theological debater—His "Familiar Letters."
- VII.—William Livingston—His "Philosophic Solitude"—Manner and spirit of the poem—Antithesis between his ideal life and his real one—His strong character—Outward engagements—His activity as a pamphleteer and as a writer in the journals—His burlesque definition of his own creed—His "Review of the Military Operations in North America"—His "Verses to Eliza."
- VIII.—William Smith—The course of his life—His special interest in the history of his native province—His "History of New York"—Criticisms upon it—Samuel Smith and his "History of the Colony of Nova Cæsarea or New Jersey."

2. PENNSYLVANIA.

- I.—The founders of Pennsylvania—The high motives of their work—Their social severity—Intellectual greatness of William Penn—Justice and

- liberality imparted by him to the constitution of his province—Education provided for—First impulses to literary production in Pennsylvania—The development of a literary spirit in Philadelphia.
- II.—Gabriel Thomas—A brisk Quaker—His "Account" of Pennsylvania and of West New Jersey—His enthusiasm for his province—Its freedom from lawyers and doctors—Its proffer of relief to the distressed in the old world—Richard Frame—His "Short Description of Pennsylvania"—John Holme—His "True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania"—Jonathan Dickenson—"God's Protecting Providence Man's Surest Help."
- III.—James Logan—Penn invites him to America and trusts to him his affairs there—His fidelity to the Penns and to the people—Difficulties of his position—His great intellectual attainments—His writings published and unpublished.
- IV.—William Smith—His influence upon intellectual culture in the middle colonies—Arrival at New York—His "General Idea of the College of Mirania"—Is invited to Philadelphia—His useful career as educator, preacher, and writer.
- V.—A succession of small writers—Jacob Taylor—Henry Brooke—Samuel Keimer—Aquila Rose—James Ralph—George Webb and his "Bachelors' Hall"—Joseph Breintnal—A poem from "Titan's Almanac" for 1730—Joseph Shippen—John Webbe—Lewis Evans.
- VI.—Samuel Davies—Born and educated in Pennsylvania—Acquires in Virginia great fame as a pulpit-orator—His mission to England—Becomes president of the College of New Jersey—His death—Great popularity of his published sermons down to the present time—His traits as a preacher—Passage from his sermon on "The General Resurrection."
- VII.—Thomas Godfrey, the poet—Connection of his father's family with Franklin—His early life and death—Publication of his "Juvenile Poems"—His "Prince of Parthia," the first American drama—A study of it.
- VIII.—Benjamin Franklin, the first man of letters in America to achieve cosmopolitan fame—His writings during our present period—His great career during the subsequent period.

I. NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY.

I.

NEAR the middle of the year 1664, the Dutch town of New Amsterdam was suddenly transformed into the English town of New York,—being then just forty-one years old, and having a population of fifteen hundred souls. The whole province, of course, shared the new name and the new mastership that had overtaken its chief town.

The Dutch, who founded both town and province, had thriven there from the beginning, according to the habit of their race,—a patient, devout, labor-loving, wealth-getting, stolid community. Though popular education was neglected, and intellectual life ran sluggish and dull, there were among them many men of strong brains and scholarly attainments:¹ Van der Donck, Megapolensis, and De Vries, who wrote history; Stuyvesant, Beeckman, and Van Rensselaer, whose letters show considerable learning; Van Dincklagen, and Van Schelluyne, who were wise in the law; Jacob Steendam, Henricus Selyns, and Nicasius De Sillè, who wrote poetry;² and besides these, several theologians and physicians who were well-read in their own sciences.

Though the prevailing race in New Amsterdam was Dutch, from an early day the town had been an attractive one to men of other races. Twenty-one years before it fell into the hands of the English, it had, within it and near it, a population speaking eighteen different languages.³ After it fell into the hands of the English, its attractiveness to men of many languages certainly did not diminish; and it became, what its best historian calls it, "the most polygenous of all the British dependencies in North America."⁴ In the first twenty-four years of its existence under English sway, its population was nearly quadrupled; and by the end of the colonial time, it had increased almost twenty-fold. A community of many tongues, of many customs, of many faiths,—there was, doubtless, in that fact a prophecy of metropolitan largeness and generosity, in store for it somewhere in the future.

Nevertheless, we shall greatly err if we imagine that, during the larger part of the colonial time, New York was much more than a prosperous and drowsy Dutch village,

¹ J. R. Brodhead, "*Hist. N. Y.*" I. 748.

² "*Anthology of New Netherland*; or, *Translations from the early Dutch poets of New York, with memoirs of their lives*," by Henry C. Murphy. New York, 1865.

³ J. R. Brodhead, "*Hist. N. Y.*" I. 374.

⁴ *Ibid.* II. 387.

perplexed by polyglot interference and the menace of intellectual illumination; the scene of a petty life; ravaged by sectarian and provincial bigotries, and by vulgar competitions in society and in politics; very slowly moving toward the discovery that, in all the world, there is any other pursuit so noble as the pursuit of wealth. The historian, William Smith, writing in 1757, mentions that, for a long time, his own father and James De Lancey "were the only academics" in the province; and that, as late as 1745, there were only thirteen more.¹ "What a contrast," he exclaims, "in everything respecting the cultivation of science, between this and the colonies first settled by the English!"² "Our schools are of the lowest order—the instructors want instruction; and through a long and shameful neglect of all the arts and sciences, our common speech is extremely corrupt; and the evidences of bad taste, both as to thought and language, are visible in all our proceedings, public and private."³

The history of literature in such a community, at such a period, must be the record, not of any concentrated and continuous literary activity, but of the occasional efforts of cultivated men to express themselves, for practical purposes, in some literary form.

II.

DANIEL DENTON, the son of a minister in Connecticut, removed in 1644 into the province of New York, where he rose to distinction both as a land-owner and as a politician. In 1670, apparently with the view of attracting immigration to that province, he published, in London, "A Brief Description of New York,"⁴—a book of twenty-two pages, uncommonly graphic and animated. He kept closely to the facts that had come under his own eyes, prudently declin-

¹ Wm. Smith, "Hist. N. Y." II. 113.

² Ibid. 379.

³ Ibid. I. 323. ⁴ Reprinted, New York, 1845, ed. by Gabriel Furman.

ing to say anything about those portions of the province that lay "to the northward yet undiscovered," or in "the bowels of the earth not yet opened." Even on the basis of literal and visible fact, however, he had enough, both useful and beautiful, to justify his enthusiasm for the land which he sought to make known to English emigrants. He gives an account of its fitness for all sorts of industrial success; not forgetting to describe its natural charms, as in May, when "you shall see the woods and fields so curiously bedecked with roses, and an innumerable multitude of delightful flowers, . . . that you may behold nature contending with art, and striving to equal if not excel many gardens in England;"¹ and "divers sorts of singing-birds, whose chirping notes salute the ears of travellers with an harmonious discord; and in every pond and brook, green, silken frogs, who, warbling forth their untuned tunes, strive to bear a part in this music."² Having given a sufficient account of the natural and social advantages of the province, he seeks to win inhabitants for it by appealing to the English love of personal independence and domestic thrift: "If there be any terrestrial happiness to be had by people of all ranks, especially of an inferior rank, it must certainly be here. Here any one may furnish himself with land, and live rent-free; yea, with such a quantity of land that he may weary himself with walking over his fields of corn and all sorts of grain. . . . Here those which Fortune hath frowned upon in England to deny them an inheritance amongst their brethren, or such as by their utmost labors can scarcely procure a living, . . . may procure here inheritances of lands and possessions, stock themselves with all sorts of cattle, enjoy the benefit of them whilst they live, and leave them to the benefit of their children when they die. Here you need not trouble the shambles for meat, nor bakers and brewers for beer and bread, nor run to a linen-draper for a supply. . . . If there

¹ "A Brief Description," etc. 4.

² *Ibid.* 5-6.

be any terrestrial Canaan, 'tis surely here, where the land floweth with milk and honey. The inhabitants are blessed with peace and plenty, blessed in their country, blessed in their fields, blessed in the fruit of their bodies, in the fruit of their grounds, in the increase of their cattle, horses, and sheep, blessed in their basket and in their store; in a word, blessed in whatsoever they take in hand, or go about, the earth yielding plentiful increase to all their painful labors."¹

Precisely fifteen years after the publication of Daniel Denton's winsome sketch of the province of New York, Thomas Budd, of New Jersey, a worthy Quaker, and a man of much importance in his own neighborhood, published, likewise at London, a little book entitled "Good Order established in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in America."² The purpose of this book, like that of Daniel Denton, was to catch the eye of emigrants; and for that purpose it perhaps did not need, as certainly it did not have, much literary merit.

Another book belonging to this pioneer period of literature in New York and its neighborhood, is a very curious one: "News of a Trumpet sounding in the Wilderness; or, The Quakers' ancient testimony revived, examined, and compared with itself, and also with their new doctrine—whereby the ignorant may learn wisdom and the wise advance in their understandings;" published by William Bradford in 1697, and written by Daniel Leeds, once a Quaker and an early settler in Pennsylvania. This man, having quarrelled with his brethren there, abandoned them and finally their province, and established himself in New York, probably in 1693, where, for about thirty years, he continued in his famous almanacs that warfare against the Quakers which he had begun in his book.

¹ "A Brief Description," etc. 19-21.

² Reprinted, New York, 1865, ed. by Edward Armstrong.

III.

LEWIS MORRIS, born in 1671, on the paternal estate of Morrisania, lived a long and vigorous life as colonial politician in New York and New Jersey; was, for more than twenty years, chief-justice of the former province, and died, in 1746, as royal governor of the latter; a man of large inherited wealth, of high social consideration, of bold and somewhat unscrupulous talent; a natural intriguer. Though he settled into manhood sufficiently sedate, his youth was uncommonly vivacious, and sparkled long afterward in a trail of amusing traditions. Being left an orphan in his infancy, he came under the care of an uncle, who seems to have found the boy hard to tame into industry and propriety. At one time, he had for his tutor an enthusiastic Quaker, one Hugh Coppathwaite, who enjoyed much of the divine presence through various inward and outward communications. The boy conceived the happy thought of helping his preceptor to a new revelation, and himself to a holiday; and, accordingly, hiding in the branches of a tree under which the Quaker was used to walk, the lad called out to him in solemn tones, and commanded him to go away at once, and preach the gospel among the Mohawks. The good man accepted the mandate as the very voice of heaven, and was on the point of setting out to obey it, when, unluckily for the boy, the trick was discovered, and his studies were not interrupted.¹ Subsequently, breaking away from all restraints, he roamed into Virginia to see the world, thence to the West Indies, picking up a living as best he could; after some years, the vagabond came home, was pardoned by his uncle, married, and entered soon upon his distinguished public career. He was an able speaker; loved power over men, and the arts by which it is gained; and though his own contact with books must have been casual

¹ Wm. Smith, "*Hist. N. Y.*" ed. 1814, 202.

and irregular, he greatly enjoyed literature and the society of literary men.¹ There remains a letter of his to his London bookseller, for the year 1739, containing a list of books which he desired, and indicating that, even at the age of sixty-eight, his mind was reaching out toward new studies, as well as old ones: law books, political treatises, theological writings, histories, a Hebrew grammar, an Arabic grammar, and an edition of John Milton.²

He wrote nothing that he thought of as literature; but the brightness and vigor of his mind are shown in his correspondence, and in his state-papers. He appears to have been not incapable even of sportive rhymes on occasion. For instance, in 1709, in sending to the governor of New York, Lord Lovelace, a memorial for the board of trade, he added a private address on his own account, beginning with these lines:

"As kings at their meals sit alone at a table,
Not deigning to eat with the lords of the rabble,
So the great Lewis Morris presents an address
By himself, all alone, not one else of the mess."³

In 1735, he went to England, to make complaint to the parliament and ministry respecting the conduct of William Cosby, at that time governor of New York, under royal appointment; and his letters to friends at home are good examples of the sprightliness of his mind. The visit of this American politician to the metropolis, appears to have been the means of a rough disenchantment, robbing him of many beautiful provincial illusions respecting the tender and paternal care with which English statesmen were supposed to deal with Americans and their affairs: "You have very imperfect notions of the world on this side of the water—I mean that world with which I have to do. They are unconcerned at the sufferings of the people in

¹ Wm. Smith, "*Hist. N. Y.*" ed. 1814, 202.

² "*Papers of Lewis Morris*," 47.

³ *Ibid.* 322.

America. . . . It may be you will be surprised to hear that the most nefarious crime a governor can commit is not, by some, counted so bad, as the crime of complaining of it; the last is an arraignment of the ministry that advised the sending of him."¹ "We talk in America of applications to parliaments. Alas! my friend, parliaments are parliaments everywhere; here, as well as with us, though more numerous. We admire the heavenly bodies which glitter at a distance; but should we be removed into Jupiter or Saturn, perhaps we should find it composed of as dark materials as our own earth. . . . We have a parliament and ministry, some of whom, I am apt to believe, know that there are plantations and governors—but not quite so well as we do. Like the frogs in the fable, the mad pranks of a plantation governor is sport to them, though death to us; and [they] seem less concerned in our contests than we are at those between crows and king-birds. Governors are called the king's representatives; and when by repeated instances of avarice, cruelty, and injustice, they extort complaints from the injured, in terms truly expressive of the violence committed and injuries suffered, it must be termed a flying in the face of government; the king's representative must be treated with softness and decency; the thing complained of is nothing near so criminal in them, as the manner of complaint in the injured. And who is there that is equal to the task of procuring redress? Changing the man is far from an adequate remedy, if the thing remains the same; and we had as well keep an ill, artless governor we know, as to change him for one equally ill, with more art, that we do not know. One of my neighbors used to say that he always rested better in a bed abounding with fleas after they had filled their bellies, than to change it for a new one equally full of hungry ones; the fleas having no business there but to eat. The inference is easy."²

¹ "Papers of Lewis Morris," 24-25.

² *Ibid.* 23-24.

IV.

CADWALLADER COLDEN was the son of a Presbyterian minister in Scotland, but was himself accidentally born in Ireland. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh; after studying medicine there and in London, he emigrated to America in 1710, and settled at Philadelphia for the practice of his profession. In 1718, at the friendly solicitation of General Robert Hunter, the governor of New York, he removed to that province, where he received the office of surveyor-general; became proprietor of a large estate in lands; was made a member of the king's council, and in the latter part of his life, lieutenant-governor, with frequent exercise of the duties of governor; and died, in September, 1776, aged eighty-eight, a loyalist to his king, and bitterly hated by the people whom he had served so long, but whose later movements toward revolution he had felt it his duty to resist.

Thus, the life of Cadwallader Colden, though it had a patriarchal length, had not the patriarchal quietude; it was a life of manifold outward occupation, and latterly of political turmoil and rancor; and yet, so valiant and craving was his spirit, that he found time, during all those busy lustrums of his, to be not only a cultivator of various learning, but one of the leaders of mankind in its cultivation. A monument of his industry and of his versatility, remains to us in the vast mass of his writings, published and unpublished, which deal, acutely and philosophically, with almost every great topic of human interest,—divinity, ethics, metaphysics, politics, mathematics, history, geology, botany, optics, zoölogy, medicine, agriculture, and even certain improvements in the mechanic arts, as stereotypy.¹

The one production of his that most nearly approaches a purely literary effort, is "The History of the Five Indian

¹ The rich Colden MSS. are in possession of the N. Y. Hist. Soc., and well deserve careful editing and publication.

Nations." Of this work, the first part, bringing the narrative down to 1688, was originally published in New York, in 1727;¹ and the second part, continuing the narrative to the peace of Ryswick, 1697, was published in London, in 1747.² The book is principally a sketch of five powerful allied Indian tribes then residing in the northern part of the province of New York,—their forms of government, their wars with hostile tribes, their conflicts and treaties with Frenchmen, Dutchmen, and Englishmen; upon the whole, a very slender, not altogether accurate, and not in the least interesting account of sundry parcels of savages, of their steady employment in scalping and in getting scalped, mitigated by occasional interludes of palaver with one another and with white men. Though the author writes with ease, and generally with verbal correctness, it is impossible for him to redeem his book from the curse of being a history of what deserves no history. A single episode, giving the exploits of the Algonquin chief, Piscaret, has some dramatic vividness, even though also the flavor of palpable myth;³ while the best piece of writing in the book, is its dedication to William Burnet, the governor of New York,—particularly, the passage wherein the author celebrates the austere virtues of the savages whose history he records: "The Five Nations are a poor, barbarous people, under the darkest ignorance; and yet a bright and noble genius shines through these black clouds. None of the greatest Roman heroes have discovered a greater love to their country, or a greater contempt of death, than these barbarians have done, when life and liberty came in competition. Indeed, I think our Indians have outdone the Romans in this particular; for some of the greatest Romans have murdered themselves, to avoid

¹ An exact reprint of this edition, with an introduction and notes by John Gilmary Shea, was made in N. Y. in 1866.

² A very corrupt edition, however, containing omissions and additions unauthorized by Colden.

³ "The History of the Five Indian Nations," Shea's ed. 12-15.

shame or torments; whereas our Indians have refused to die, meanly, with the least pain, when they thought their country's honor would be at stake by it, but gave their bodies willingly up to the most cruel torments of their enemies, to show that the Five Nations consisted of men whose courage and resolution could not be shaken."¹

The hope that these vivacious sentences awaken in us, of some broad and fine human interest connected with the history of the author's nude patriots and stoics, is not fulfilled.

V.

In the year 1722, there was published in London a book respecting America, which deserved the deep attention of English and American statesmen at that time, and which, on one account, is still worthy of remembrance by us. It bore this formidable title: "A Description of the English Province of Carolana, by the Spaniards called Florida, and by the French La Louisiane; as also the great and famous river, Meschacebe or Mississippi, the five vast navigable lakes of fresh-water, and the parts adjacent; together with an account of the commodities, of the growth and production of the said province; and a preface containing some considerations on the consequences of the French making settlements there."

The author was Daniel Coxe, a man of wealth, and of high social and political influence in New Jersey, who had inherited from his father a claim to the vast territory described in his book. It is the preface of the book, however, that is now of special interest to us; for in that preface, the author discussed, at great length and with great ability, the condition and the perils of the English colonies in America, the legal right of the English to the interior of the continent, and especially, the strategy to be pursued by enlightened statesmanship in realizing that

¹ "The History of the Five Nations," Dedication, 3-4.

right in opposition to the competing claims of the Spanish and the French. The chief element in the strategy proposed by him, is described in one word—union. Thus, in 1722, Daniel Coxe publicly explained and advocated a plan of union among the American colonies,—the details of which closely resemble those brought forward by Franklin, thirty-two years afterward, at the famous congress of Albany: "That all the colonies . . . be united under a legal, regular, and firm establishment; over which . . . a lieutenant or supreme governor may be . . . appointed to preside on the spot, to whom the governors of each colony shall be subordinate;" that the council or assembly of each province elect annually two delegates "to a great council or general convention of the estates of the colonies;" that the latter "consult and advise for the good of the whole." "A coalition or union of this nature," adds Daniel Coxe, in his earnest argument for it, "tempered with and grounded on prudence, moderation, and justice, and a generous encouragement given to the labor, industry, and good management of all sorts and conditions of persons, . . . will, in all probability, lay a sure and lasting foundation of dominion, strength, and trade, sufficient not only to secure and promote the prosperity of the plantations, but to revive and greatly increase the late flourishing state and condition of Great Britain."¹

VI.

JONATHAN DICKINSON was born at Hatfield, Massachusetts, in 1688; and was graduated at Yale College, in 1706. In 1708, he went to Elizabethtown, New Jersey; and there, for the subsequent thirty-nine years, he lived a most energetic life, as minister, physician, educator, and author,

¹ "A Description," etc. ed. 1726, Pref. It may be mentioned that, in 1697, William Penn had suggested a similar plan of union among the colonies. Hildreth, "Hist. U. S." II. 444.

displaying great ability in all these spheres, and acquiring a commanding influence through the whole land. He was a leader in ecclesiastical politics in the middle colonies; he was a fascinating and mighty pulpit-orator; he was the principal founder of the College of New Jersey, and its first president; in person he was of so saintly and impressive an aspect, "that the wicked seemed to tremble in his presence;"¹ his long life was so pure, consistent, and noble, that "the memory of it is still fragrant on the spot where he lived," and the descendants "of those who knew and loved him cherish an hereditary reverence for his name and his grave."²

He was a voluminous author, his chief distinction pointing toward skill in theological controversy. He had the talent of a logician; he was an intrepid debater; as a protagonist for Calvinism, he stood in reputation among American theologians of his time, next to Jonathan Edwards; and a great Scottish divine³ testified that even "the British Isles had produced no such writers on divinity in the eighteenth century," as were these two men,—both born on the confines of the New England forests, and both bred at Yale College.

Perhaps the most interesting specimen of his literary and dialectical gifts, is his "Familiar Letters to a Gentleman, upon a Variety of seasonable and important Subjects in Religion;"⁴ in which are these sentences, portraying the logical difficulties to be assumed by any one who shall reject the historical verity of the New Testament: "If this history be not true, then all the known laws of nature were changed; all the motives and incentives to human actions, that ever had obtained in the world, have been entirely inverted; the wickedest men in the world have taken the greatest pains and endured the greatest hardship and mis-

¹ David Austin, in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," III. 17.

² Ibid. 17.

³ Dr. John Erskine, *ibid.* 17.

⁴ Boston, 1745.

ery, to invent, practise, and propagate the most holy religion that ever was; and not only the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, but whole nations of men and all sorts of men, Christian, Jew, and pagan, were—nobody can imagine how or why—confederated to propagate a known cheat, against their own honor, interest, and safety; and multitudes of men, without any prospect of advantage, here or hereafter, were brought most constantly and tenaciously to profess what they knew to be false, to exchange all the comforts and pleasures of life for shame and contempt, for banishments, scourgings, imprisonments, and death; in a word, voluntarily to expose themselves to be hated both of God and man, and that without any known motive whatsoever.”¹

VII.

In the year 1747, was published in New York a little book entitled “*Philosophic Solitude; or, The Choice of a Rural Life*,”—a poem of nearly seven hundred lines, announcing itself as the production of “a gentleman educated at Yale College.” This gentleman proved to be William Livingston, then twenty-four years old, just beginning the practice of the law in New York, and destined to a long and illustrious career as a statesman in the era of the Revolution. During his whole life, he was absorbed in stormy and agitating public movements; yet he found time to retain an uncommon intimacy with the best literature, and to exercise in many ways his own remarkable aptitude for literary work. This poem is obviously the effort of a rhyming apprentice, still in bondage to the methods of his master, Alexander Pope; yet he catches the knack of his master with a cleverness proving the possibility of original work, on his own account, by and by. It illustrates, likewise, a trait of human nature, that this young lawyer and politician, having given himself to a

¹ “*Familiar Letters*,” etc. 58.

practical career in the thick of the world's affairs, and one made tumultuous by his own aggressive spirit, should have begun it by depicting, in enthusiastic verse, his preference for a life of absolute retirement and serene meditation :

"Let ardent heroes seek renown in arms,
Pant after fame, and rush to war's alarms ;
To shining palaces, let fools resort,
And dunces cringe to be esteemed at court :
Mine be the pleasures of a rural life,
From noise remote, and ignorant of strife ;
Far from the painted belle, the white-gloved beau,
The lawless masquerade and midnight show ;
From ladies, lapdogs, courtiers, garters, stars,
Fops, fiddlers, tyrants, emperors, and czars."¹

He then pictures for us the situation of the home in the country, in which he would spend his tranquil life,—its furniture, its surroundings; he sings over again his love of solitude; he mentions the sort of friends whom he would have within call; he portrays the frame of devotion and calm contemplation which should abide with him. His hermitage should be far from

"Prime-ministers, and sycophantic knaves,
Illustrious villains, and illustrious slaves."²

There, he would

"live retired, contented, and serene,
Forgot, unknown, unenvied, and unseen."³

He would have books for his most intimate friends; he would have Virgil as prince of the classic bards; he would be surrounded by Milton, Pope, Dryden, and "the gentle Watts;" also, by Locke, Raleigh, Denham; among philosophers, he would give the place of honor to Newton. Moreover, he would alleviate his solitude by the presence of a

¹ "Philosophic Solitude," 13.

² Ibid. 16.

³ Ibid. 17.

wife. This being should be none of those "ideal goddesses" who

" to church repair,
Peep through the fan, and mutter o'er a prayer;
Or, deeply studied in coquettish rules,
Aim wily glances at unthinking fools."¹

She is to be not an ideal goddess, but a literal one, an absolutely faultless being, who having accepted his addresses becomes, he says,

" Imparadised within my eager arms."

He then reaches the climax of his poem by depicting the crowning experience of his "philosophic solitude"—a solitude the peculiar rigors of which would not seem to have required a vast exertion of philosophy to endure :

" With her I'd spend the pleasurable day,
While fleeting minutes gayly danced away :
I'd reign the happy monarch of her charms ;
Oft in her panting bosom would I lay,
And, in dissolving raptures, melt away ;
Then lulled by nightingales to balmy rest,
My blooming fair should slumber at my breast."²

The voluptuous languors of this poem, report a quality in the author that did not control him; and henceforward, through nearly half a century, his real life was a battle for stern and great ideas. He was of Scottish ancestry; and if he had within him the romantic intensity of his race, he had likewise its intellectual ruggedness, its iron grasp of conviction, its unsubmissiveness, its onrushing and most fervid pleasure in strife, its nerve of invincible endurance,—a double strain sent down to him from the old Scottish ballad-makers and from the old Scottish covenanters. The practice of his profession did not consume his energy; he was felt, as a pamphleteer and as a journalist,

¹ "Philosophic Solitude," 40-41.

² Ibid. 45.

in all the topics that came up for debate in the colony in those years, especially those connected with the denominational control of King's College, with military operations, and with the establishment of an American Episcopate. He was a resolute member of the Reformed Dutch Church. By his newspaper articles against the efforts of the Episcopalians to obtain the mastery of King's College, he had brought upon himself the charges of atheism, deism, and Presbyterianism; and with reference to these imputations, he retorted upon his opponents with his usual wit and vigor, in a travesty on the Thirty-nine Articles: "1. I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, without any foreign comments or human explanations but my own; for which I should, doubtless, be honored with martyrdom, did I not live in a government which restrains that fiery zeal which would reduce a man's body to ashes, for the illumination of his understanding. . . . 5. I believe that the word orthodox is a hard, equivocal, priestly term that has caused the effusion of more blood than all the Roman emperors put together. . . . 7. I believe that to defend the Christian religion is one thing, and to knock a man on the head for being of a different opinion is another thing. . . . 11. I believe that he who feareth God and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of Him, even though he refuse to worship any man or order of men into the bargain. . . . 13. I believe that riches, ornaments, and ceremonies were assumed by churches for the same reason that garments were invented by our first parents. . . . 15. I believe that a man may be a good Christian, though he be of no sect in Christendom. . . . 17. I believe that our faith, like our stomachs, may be overcharged, especially if we are prohibited to chew what we are commanded to swallow. . . . 38. I believe that the virulence of some of the clergy against my speculations, proceeds not from their affection to Christianity, which is founded on too firm a basis to be shaken by the freest inquiry, and the divine authority of which I sin-

cerely believe,—without receiving a farthing for saying so ; but from an apprehension of bringing into contempt their ridiculous claims and unreasonable pretensions, which may justly tremble at the slightest scrutiny, and which I believe I shall more and more put into a panic, in defiance of both press and pulpit.”¹

His most serious effort as a prose writer, during this period of our literary history, was “A Review of the Military Operations in North America,” from 1753 to 1756. This work is in the form of a letter addressed to a nobleman, and was first published, without the author’s name, in London, in the year 1756. Its historical value is considerable,—principally, as embalming the fury of partisanship that raged, at that time, between the great families of the colony of New York, and that drew within its folds the reputations of Sir William Johnson on the one hand, and of Governor William Shirley on the other. As a literary work, the book rises far above the mob of political pamphlets. Though somewhat lacking in concentration, it is written with much elegance ; and it is especially remarkable for its elaborate portraits of the great men of the day. The painter of these portraits makes no pretence of impartiality, but tints his canvas at will with the frankness of his love or of his hate.

It is not disagreeable to be reminded, once more, of the tender and gallant vein that streaked the nature of this robust political combatant ; and to find that, even amid the rancors of his strenuous career, there were moods in which he could dash off verses so graceful and so sprightly as these :

“Soon as I saw Eliza’s blooming charms,
I longed to clasp the fair one in my arms.
Her every feature proved a pointed dart
That pierced with pleasing pain my wounded heart ;

¹ From No. 46 of “The Independent Reflector,” as reprinted in T. Sedgwick, “Life of W. Livingston,” 86-87.

And yet, this beauty—it transcends belief—
 This blooming beauty is an arrant thief.
 Attend : her numerous thefts I will rehearse
 In honest narrative and faithful verse.

From the bright splendor of the noonday sky,
 She stole the sparkling lustre of her eye.
 Her cheeks, though lovely red, still more to adorn,
 She filched the blushes of the orient morn.
 To embalm her lips, she robbed the honey-dew ;
 To increase their bloom, the rose-bud of its hue.

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Her voice, enchanting to the dullest ears,
 She pillaged from the music of the spheres ;
 To make her neck still lovelier to the sight,
 She robbed the ermine of its spotless white ;
 From Virgil's Juno, Jove's fictitious mate,
 She stole the queen-like and majestic gait.
 Of all her charms, she robbed the Cyprian queen,
 And, still insatiate, stripped the Graces of their mien.

But now, to perfect an harmonious whole,
 With those internal charms that can't be stole,
 Kind Heaven, without her thieving, took delight
 To grant supernal grace, and inward light :
 To charms angelic, it vouchsafed to impart
 Angelic virtues, and an angel heart.
 Thus fair in form, embellished thus in mind,
 All beauteous outward, inward all refined,
 What could induce Eliza still to steal,
 And make poor plundered me her theft to feel ?
 For, last, she stole (if with ill-purposed art
 I'll ne'er forgive the theft) she stole—my heart ;
 Yes, yes, I will, if she will but incline
 To give me half of hers, for all the whole of mine."¹

VIII.

WILLIAM SMITH was the son of an eminent lawyer of New York, where he was born in 1728. He was graduated

¹ T. Sedgwick, "Life of W. Livingston," 117-118.

at Yale College, in 1745. Devoting himself to the professions of law and of politics, he speedily rose to distinction in both. During the Revolutionary War, he was a loyalist; in 1783, he went to England, and three years later, was rewarded for his fidelity to the crown, by the appointment of chief-justice of Canada. In Canada, he died in 1793.

While still a very young man, he gave great attention to the legal and political records of his native province,—an experience that led him to write a "History of New York, from the First Discovery to the Year 1732." This work, which was first published in London, in 1757,¹ is a strong and clear piece of work, with the tone of a scholar and a gentleman, somewhat dashed by provincialism. Himself a New York politician, and the son of one, it was not easy for him, in dealing with the story of New York politics, wholly to suppress his partisan prejudices; and his narrative, as he admitted, "deserves not the name of a history."² It is an able and sturdy historical pamphlet, aggravated by vast public documents quoted in bulk. Although he believed that in his book the laws of truth had not been infringed, either "by positive assertions, oblique, insidious hints, wilful suppressions, or corrupt misrepresentations," and that in his writing of it he had chosen "rather to be honest and dull than agreeable and false,"³ he was charged by a contemporary, Cadwallader Colden,⁴ with having "wilfully misrepresented" some things; while in our own time, the ablest of the historians of New York, John Romeyn Brodhead,⁵ has declared that, in several instances, William Smith gave utterance to "fabulous" statements.

In his book, it is interesting to note the tokens of American sensitiveness, even in that age, to the infinite and serene ignorance prevalent among the people of England

¹ It has been several times reprinted; but the only satisfactory edition is that published by the N. Y. Hist. Soc., in 2 vols., 1829. In this edition, the work is brought down by the author to 1762.

² Pref. to ed. of 1814, xiv.

³ Ibid. xiv.

⁴ N. Y. Hist. Soc. Coll. for 1863, 181.

⁵ "Hist. N. Y." I. 44, note.

concerning their own plantations in America : " The main body of the people conceive of these plantations under the idea of wild, boundless, inhospitable, uncultivated deserts ; and hence, the punishment of transportation hither, in the judgment of most, is thought not much less severe than an infamous death."¹ His portraits of the long line of royal governors who had in succession preyed upon the province, are drawn with the vivacity of genuine feeling ; in the ardor of his filial pride and affection, he has painted a glowing picture of the learning and eloquence of his own father ;² and his sketches of society in New York in his time, particularly of the steady preference there of the pursuits of wealth to those of mere knowledge, have a courageous authenticity, perhaps not altogether obsolete even yet.³

In the year 1765, was published " The History of the Colony of Nova Cæsarea, or New Jersey ;" the author being Samuel Smith, an honest, solid Quaker, a native of the region that he wrote about, himself then forty-five years old. His book is a dry, ponderous performance, a compilation of dull documents and dull facts ; the whole written, doubtless, with great patience, and only to be read by an abundant exercise of the same virtue.

2. PENNSYLVANIA.

I.

A sagacious English student of American history has said that " the most remarkable of the American colonies after the New England group, is Pennsylvania."⁴ In spite of all outward differences, of all mutual dislikes, there was an inward kinship between the Quakers of Pennsylvania and the Puritans of New England. " I came for the Lord's

¹ " Hist. of N. Y." ed. of 1814, Pref. ix. ² Ibid. ed. of 1829, II. 48-50.

³ Ibid. I. 328, 367 ; II. 3, 282, 384.

⁴ Goldwin Smith, " On the Foundation of the American Colonies," 26.

sake," said William Penn, in 1682.¹ "Our business here in this new land," said one of the first Pennsylvanians, "is not so much to build houses, and establish factories, and promote trade and manufactures that may enrich ourselves, . . . as to erect temples of holiness and righteousness, which God may delight in; to lay such lasting foundations of temperance and virtue, as may support the superstructures of our future happiness, both in this and the other world."²

The society that these men founded in Pennsylvania was, of course, serious, laborious, economic, monotonous, prim, especially pained by the pleasures of existence. Thomas Chalkley abhorred music as a thing "of evil consequence;" he denounced cards "as engines of Satan;" and of dancing he said, that "as many paces or steps as the man or woman takes in the dance, so many paces or steps they take toward hell."³

On the other hand, William Penn was a man of great intellectual foresight, and swayed by a passion to be both just and humane; and he began by inoculating his young commonwealth with the idea of civic generosity: "We have, with reverence to God and good conscience to men, to the best of our skill contrived and composed the frame of this government to the great end of all government,—to support power in reverence with the people, and to secure the people from the abuse of power."⁴ "Whoever is right," said he, "the persecutor must be wrong."⁵ From the beginning, a part of the fundamental law of Pennsylvania was the law of liberty for the souls of men. Through every turnpike in that province, ideas travelled toll-free.

But were there, in that province, any ideas inclined to travel? The founder of Quakerism, being himself able to

¹ R. Proud, "*Hist. Pa.*" I. 210.

² Given in J. W. Leeds, "*A Hist. U. S.*" 212-213.

³ T. Chalkley, *Works*, 4.

⁴ J. Grahame, "*Hist. U. S.*" I. 506.

⁵ W. Hepworth Dixon, "*Wm. Penn*," etc. 52.

get all necessary wisdom by the facility of an inward flash, quite naturally despised those who had to get it by the slow process of study; he despised books, also, and schools; and he declared that "God stood in no need of human learning."¹ William Penn, however, and many of his associates in the settlement of Pennsylvania, had never yielded to that barbaric mood of their religious teacher; and being themselves men of considerable learning,² they at once devised means for the spread of learning among others. "Before the pines had been cleared from the ground," they "began to build schools and set up a printing-press."³ It was their noble ambition, "*inter silvas quaerere verum*."⁴ The first school in Pennsylvania was founded during the first year of the existence of Pennsylvania; and in the sixth year of its existence, there was in Philadelphia an academy at which even those who had no money, might get knowledge without price.

The first impulse to the production of any sort of literature in Pennsylvania was given by a desire to publish through the world the advantages of that commonwealth. Very soon, the fierceness of religious controversy set other pens to work,—though with results too crude and too brutal to be called literature. Science, also, and the slavery-question, and the Indian-question prompted others to write. Near the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century,—about the time that Benjamin Franklin commenced his career there,—Philadelphia, though still dominated by the Quakers, had become the seat of a large population who were not Quakers; it had something of the liberal tone of a metropolis,—where men of cultivation, of vivacity, of literary aptitude, had begun to realize

¹ W. Hepworth Dixon, "Wm. Penn," etc. 53.

² Job R. Tyson, "The Social and Intellectual State of the Colony of Pa. prior to the year 1743," 46.

³ W. Hepworth Dixon, "Wm. Penn," etc. 207.

⁴ T. I. Wharton, "The Prov. Lit. of Pa.," in Pa. Hist. Soc. Mem. I. 109.

the presence of one another, and of a common literary purpose. By the close of the colonial age, Philadelphia had grown to be the centre of a literary activity more vital and more versatile than was to be seen anywhere else upon the continent, except at Boston. In the ancient library of Philadelphia, there are "four hundred and twenty-five original books and pamphlets that were printed in that city before the Revolution."¹

II.

In 1681, in the first ship that sailed from England to the great American province of William Penn, was the pleasant Quaker, Gabriel Thomas, who, for the next seventeen years, lent a strong and willing hand to the task of building up there a generous drab commonwealth; and who returning to England in 1698, probably for a brief visit, carried with him and published in London, in that year, "An Historical and Geographical Account of the Province and Country of Pennsylvania and of West New Jersey." The book, which is written with Quaker-like frankness and simplicity, and with an undercurrent of playfulness not exactly Quaker-like, is full of information for the guidance of the poor in the old world to a good refuge in the new; and in the author's opinion, no better spot could be found anywhere along the vast American coast than that happily obtained by William Penn: "For though this country has made little noise in story or taken up but small room in maps, yet, . . . the mighty improvements . . . that have been made lately there, are well worth communicating to the public. . . . This noble spot of earth will thrive exceedingly."² "The air here is very delicate, pleasant, and wholesome; the heavens serene, rarely o'ercast, bearing mighty resemblance to the better part of France."³ In delineating the

¹ T. I. Wharton, "The Prov. Lit. of Pa." 124.

² Preface.

³ "Account," etc. 7.

natural characteristics of the country, he passes now and then into a semi-facetious intensity, into a droll largeness of statement, from which even the demureness of his sect did not save him, and which thus early show themselves as traits of American humor; saying, for example, that the bullfrog in Pennsylvania "makes a roaring noise hardly to be distinguished from that well known of the beast from whom it takes its name."¹ His pictures of the new social conditions formed there, have elements of uncommon attractiveness; as when he remarks: "Of lawyers and physicians I shall say nothing, because this country is very peaceable and healthy. Long may it so continue, and never have occasion for the tongue of the one nor the pen of the other, both equally destructive of men's estates and lives."²

Once again, also, we catch in this book the tender American note of sympathy with men and women in Europe who have a hard lot there; a cheery voice from this side of the Atlantic sounding out clear above the countless laughter of its billows, and telling all who need a new chance in life that at last they can have it: "Reader, what I have here written is not a fiction, flam, whim, or any sinister design, either to impose upon the ignorant or credulous, or to curry favor with the rich and mighty; but in mere pity and pure compassion to the numbers of poor laboring men, women, and children in England—half-starved visible in their meagre looks—that are continually wandering up and down, looking for employment without finding any, who here need not lie idle a moment, nor want due encouragement or reward for their work, much less vagabond or drone it about. Here are no beggars to be seen, . . . nor, indeed, have any here the least occasion or temptation to take up that scandalous lazy life."³

A desire to bear public testimony to the delights and benefits of life in Pennsylvania, took possession of several

¹ "Account," etc. 16.

² Ibid. 32.

³ Ibid. 44-45.

others among its first inhabitants; and unfortunately, in some cases, this testimony sought utterance in verse. Thus, Richard Frame, probably a Quaker, published at Philadelphia, in 1692, "A Short Description of Pennsylvania; or, A relation what things are known, enjoyed, and like to be discovered in the said province."¹ So, also, John Holme, who came to Pennsylvania in 1686, and died there about the year 1701, wrote "A True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania."² Both of these works are very slight as specimens of descriptive literature; and as examples of verse, they scarcely rise to the puerile—they approach the idiotic.

A piece of narration and description, happily in honest prose, and having the merit of being uncommonly interesting, is "God's Protecting Providence Man's surest Help and Defence in Times of greatest Difficulty and most eminent Danger," by Jonathan Dickenson, an English Quaker of property and education, who, after some sojourn in Jamaica, sailed thence, in 1696, for Pennsylvania, having with him his wife, an infant child, and several negro servants. On the voyage, they were cast away on the coast of Florida, and after suffering almost incredible hardships, not only "from the devouring waves of the sea" but "also from the cruel, devouring jaws of the inhumane cannibals of Florida," they made their way to Philadelphia. Of this frightful and most afflictive experience, Dickenson wrote an account, under the title already given,—telling his story in a modest, straight-forward, manly way, like a hero and a Christian. He remained in Pennsylvania the rest of his life, became chief-justice of the province, and died there in 1722.³

¹ Published in fac-simile from the copy, supposed to be unique, in possession of the Library Company of Philadelphia, 1867.

² Printed in Pa. Hist. Soc. Mem. for 1848, 161-180.

³ His book was first published, in Philadelphia, in 1699; it was reprinted in London, in 1700; an illustrated edition in Dutch was published at Leyden, in 1710. So strong and clinging is the human interest inspired by this

III.

In 1699, when William Penn was on the point of sailing for the second time to his province, he became deeply interested in a young Irishman of Scottish descent, named James Logan, who, though highly educated, and with strong aptitudes for literary and scientific pursuits, had recently embarked in trade at Bristol. Penn saw in this young man one whom he could safely lean upon, and whom he greatly needed; and after urgent solicitation, Logan gave up his own plans, and putting his fate into Penn's keeping, went with him to America. There he remained all the rest of his days; and there he died in 1751, at the age of seventy-seven.

That second visit of William Penn to Pennsylvania proved, also, to be his last; and when, in 1701, he went on board the ship that was to carry him away from the province forever, he wrote these words to the man whom he had commissioned to stand there in his place: "I have left thee in an uncommon trust, with a singular dependence on thy justice and care, which I expect thou wilt faithfully employ in advancing my honest interest. . . . For thy own services I shall allow thee what is just and reasonable. . . . Serve me faithfully as thou expects a blessing from God, or my favor, and I shall support thee to my utmost, as thy true friend."¹ Thenceforward, James Logan's letters to his patron and to his patron's family, are the letters of a man who deserved such trust; for he served them with flawless fidelity.

His office proved to be a most laborious and vexatious one. Year by year his troubles as Penn's agent thickened. In 1704, he wrote to his master: "I wish thou could be here thyself, for I cannot bear up under all these hard-

pathetic book, that even so late as 1803 it was reprinted in English, probably for the sixth time.

¹ Pa. Hist. Soc. Mem. IX. 59-61.

ships; they break my rest, and I doubt will sink me at last. . . . I have been so true to thee, that I am not just to myself; and had I now a family, it would appear that there has scarce been a greater knave in America to another's affairs, than I have been to my own."¹

But though James Logan was through all his life thus faithful to the proprietors of Pennsylvania, he was never unfaithful to the people of Pennsylvania. He held in succession the leading offices in the province; from 1736 to 1738, as president of the council, he was really governor; and while, at times, he drew upon himself great unpopularity, he served the people better than they knew, in all their highest interests, in peace and even in war.

His long life and his great influence went especially for the public enlightenment; and in all possible ways he helped to build up good literature in Pennsylvania. His own intellectual accomplishments were extraordinary. Almost from childhood he had been familiar with the principal languages, ancient and modern; at the age of sixteen he began that enthusiastic study of the higher mathematics which he prosecuted all his life; and there seemed to be no topic in science or literature that did not have his attention. He carried on an extensive correspondence with the most illustrious scholars in Europe and America; and in these letters as well as in the mass of private papers that he left behind him, he discussed, with originality and precision, the leading subjects that then engaged the minds of learned men. "Sometimes Hebrew or Arabic characters and algebraic formulas roughen the pages of his letter-books. Sometimes his letters convey a lively Greek ode to a learned friend; and often they are written in the Latin tongue."²

The larger part of his writings still remain unprinted;

¹ Pa. Hist. Soc. Mem. IX. 325.

² J. F. Fisher, in Sparks's ed. of Works of Franklin, VII. 24-27, note. For my account of the unpublished writings of Logan, I depend chiefly on J. F. Fisher, as above; and on J. F. Watson, "*Annals of Phila.*" I. 523-526.

but during his lifetime were published, besides several Latin treatises by him upon scientific subjects, his "Translation of Cato's Distichs into English Verse," and his more celebrated translation of "M. T. Cicero's Cato Major; or, Discourse on Old Age,"—works that not only denoted his own elegant literary taste, but also tended to develop such taste in others. His correspondence with the Penn family, from 1700 to 1750, has been recently made public;¹ and though much of it is taken up with uninteresting details respecting business and politics, it is also a great storehouse of information respecting men and manners in Pennsylvania during that period. Everywhere this correspondence reveals the carefulness and the intellectual breadth of James Logan; and occasionally one finds in it a passage of general discussion, in which the clear brain and the noble heart of the writer utter themselves in language of real beauty and force.²

IV.

In 1751, the very year in which James Logan died, there came to America another man of the same Scottish stock, and of the same Scottish vigor for various intellectual work, who, in the middle colonies, and especially in Pennsylvania, was to carry forward, during the second half of the eighteenth century, many of the wholesome scientific and literary influences with which the life of James Logan had been identified, during the first half of that century. This man was William Smith, born at Aberdeen about 1726, and graduated at its university in 1747. In New York, where he spent the first two years after his arrival in America, he found the leading men greatly occupied with the project of founding a college there; and in the discussion of this subject he skilfully participated by publishing "A General Idea of the College of Mirania," a

¹ Pa. Hist. Soc. Mem. IX-X.

² For example, *ibid.* IX. 226-229.

sort of educational romance, written in graceful style, and unfolding with much vigor the author's notions of what a college in America should be.

A copy of the book soon fell under the eye of Benjamin Franklin, who was, at that time, also deeply engaged in plans for a college at Philadelphia; and was even then looking about for some one competent to take charge of it. Not long afterward, the ambitious young Scotchman was invited to Philadelphia for that purpose. He immediately went to England for holy orders; and returning to Philadelphia in 1754, he entered upon his duties at the head of the institution which, in the following year, took the name of a college. From that time onward until his death in 1803, William Smith, as educator, politician, clergyman, and man of letters, was a tireless, facile, and powerful representative in Philadelphia of the higher intellectual interests of society. Under his care the little college grew apace; and by his own example as an eloquent writer, by his enthusiasm for good literature, and by his quick and genial recognition of literary merit in the young men who were growing up around him, he did a great work for the literary development of his adopted country.¹

V.

We find in Pennsylvania, during the first sixty years of the eighteenth century, a succession of persons swayed somewhat by literary inclinations, and addicted, in a small and rather amateur way, to literary utterance, in prose or rhyme.

One of these persons was Jacob Taylor, who served the public in the various capacities of school-master, surveyor, doctor, almanac-maker, and poet. His verses usually

¹ His most important writings in our present period were published in a volume entitled "*Discourses on Public Occasions in America*," 2d ed. London, 1762.

appeared in his almanacs; and it is said¹ that, "in harmony and spirit," some of them "nearly approached to the poetry of standard authors." One of his poems is entitled "Pennsylvania;" another, "The Story of Whackum," being a satire on country quacks. He died in 1736.

A man of considerable sprightliness and social grace was Henry Brooke, younger son of Sir Henry Brooke of Cheshire, for some time collector of customs in Pennsylvania, and during many years a leading politician in the province. In 1704, James Logan, in a letter to William Penn, described him as "a young man of the most polite education and best natural parts . . . thrown away on this corner of the world."² His gift as a writer of smooth and spirited verse may be seen in a little poem of his addressed to Robert Gracie, and entitled "A Discourse of Jests."³

Many of these small writers would have found long since the repose in utter oblivion to which they have so valid a claim, had it not been for such incidental mention as is made of them by Franklin, in his "Autobiography." Thus, he records that, on his first arrival in Philadelphia as a runaway apprentice, he sought employment in the printing-office of one Samuel Keimer, a long-bearded, semi-literary, very mystical, and altogether preposterous adventurer, whom he found engaged in putting into type an elegy composed by the printer himself, on one Aquila Rose, also a printer and poet, who had but recently died. The latter was of English birth and education; and after his death, at the age of twenty-eight, "many of his best pieces" were loaned by his widow to her friends, and in consequence were lost; but in 1741, such of his verses as could then be obtained were collected by his son, Joseph Rose, and published in a pamphlet, under the title of "Poems on Several Occasions."

¹ By J. F. Fisher, "Early Poets and Poetry of Pa." 67.

² Pa. Hist. Soc. Mem. IX. 311.

³ A fragment of it is in R. W. Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of Am." 22.

James Ralph, probably born in America and near the beginning of the eighteenth century, was another of that group of witlings and poetasters whose names are strung like glass beads upon the thread of Franklin's story of his own early career in Philadelphia. At the time of Franklin's first appearance upon the scene, Ralph was a young fellow of fine appearance, glib tongue, poetic aspirations, and superficial accomplishments. In 1724, he resolved to give the British metropolis the benefit of his talents. Being then encumbered with a wife and a young child, but not with a conscience, he quietly abandoned the former, and with Franklin for a companion, went to London as a literary adventurer, where, with sharp alternations of poverty and prosperity, he remained the rest of his life, a prolific and notorious literary hack; emitting with incontinent speed political pamphlets, newspaper articles, odes, epics, plays, satires, and histories; achieving the ludicrous immortality of a niche in Pope's pantheon of dunces;¹ and honored long after his death by the strong applause of Charles James Fox.² From the moment of his first arrival in London, however, Ralph succeeded so perfectly in casting off all topics that were connected with his native country and in taking on all those themes and modes that were peculiar to a London Bohemian, that his remarkable career as a writer seems to have no significance in relation to American literature. We cordially surrender him, therefore, to the exclusive possession of our English kinsmen.

On Franklin's return from the expedition that he had made to London in the company of James Ralph, he found in Keimer's printing-office, "in the situation of a bought servant," one George Webb, "an Oxford scholar," and a native of Gloucester, England, who, having run away from college and fallen into distress in London, had obtained passage to Philadelphia on condition of doing four years'

¹ "The Dunciad," Book III. 164-165.

² See Allibone's "Dict. of Authors," II. 1731.

service after his arrival there. "He was lively, witty, good-natured, and a pleasant companion, but idle, thoughtless, and imprudent to the last degree."¹ He had a smattering of knowledge and some cleverness at verse-making; and having made his way into respectable society, he appears to have attracted considerable local attention by the merry little poems that he dashed off frequently enough. One of these is a poem of about a hundred lines, published by Franklin in 1736, and entitled "Bachelors' Hall." The name of the poem was that of a famous club-house built in the fields in Kensington by a set of Philadelphia bachelors, and long held in ill repute as the supposed seat of gluttonous and lascivious revels.² Webb's poem was an effort to placate public opinion, on behalf of the offending edifice:

"Say, goddess, tell me,—for to thee is known
What is, what was, and what shall e'er be done,
Why stands this dome erected on the plain?
For pleasure was it built, or else for gain?
For midnight revels was it ever thought?
Shall impious doctrines ever here be taught?
Or else for nobler purposes designed,
To cheer and cultivate the mind,
With mutual love each glowing breast inspire,
Or cherish friendship's now degenerate fire?
.

Tired with the business of the noisy town,
The weary bachelors their cares disown;
For this loved seat they all at once prepare,
And long to breathe the sweets of country-air.
.

'Tis not a revel or lascivious night
That to this hall the bachelors invite;
Much less shall impious doctrines here be taught,
Blush, ye accusers, at the very thought!
For other, oh, for other ends designed,
To mend the heart and cultivate the mind.

¹ "Life of Franklin," etc., ed. by John Bigelow, I. 171-173.

² J. F. Watson, "Annals of Phila." I. 432-433.

Mysterious nature here unveiled shall be,
And knotty points of deep philosophy.

But yet sometimes the all-inspiring bowl
To laughter shall provoke and cheer the soul ;
The jocund tale to humor shall invite,
And dedicate to wit a jovial night :
Not the false wit the cheated world admires,
The mirth of sailors, nor of country squires ;
Nor the gay punster's, whose quick sense affords
Naught but a miserable play on words ;
Nor the grave quidnunc's, whose enquiring head
With musty scraps of journals must be fed ;
But condescending, genuine, apt, and fit ;
Good nature is the parent of true wit.

Then, music, too, shall cheer this fair abode—
Music, the sweetest of the gifts of God ;
Music, the language of propitious love ;
Music, that things inanimate can move.

Ye winds be hushed, let no presumptuous breeze
Now dare to whistle through the rustling trees ;
Thou, Delaware, awhile forget to roar,
Nor dash thy foaming surge against the shore ;
Be thy green nymphs upon thy surface fount,
And let thy stagnant waves confess the sound ;
Let thy attentive fishes all be nigh,—
For fishes were always friends to harmony ;
Witness the dolphin which Arion bore,
And landed safely on his native shore.

Let doting cynics snarl ; let noisy zeal
Tax this design with act or thought of ill ;
Let narrow souls their rigid morals boast,
Till in the shadowy name the virtue's lost ;
Let envy strive their character to blast,
And fools despise the sweets they cannot taste,—
This certain truth let the inquirer know :
It did from good and generous motives flow.”¹

¹ I cite these lines from a reprint of the poem in Thompson Westcott's "History of Philadelphia," published in serial form in the "Sunday Dispatch" of that city.

At least one more of Franklin's early literary companions must be named by us,—Joseph Breintnal, "a copyer of deeds for the scriveners, a good-natured, friendly, middle-aged man, a great lover of poetry, reading all he could meet with, and writing some that was tolerable, very ingenious in many little knickknackeries, and of sensible conversation."¹ When Franklin undertook to write for a weekly newspaper, a series of didactic and satirical essays called "The Busy Body," he was assisted in the work by the friendly pen of Breintnal, who, in fact, continued the series for several months after Franklin had ceased to take an interest in it.²

In "Titan's Almanac" for 1730 is an anonymous poem in praise of Pennsylvania, which may interest us still, not only as a token of the ordinary poetic manner of that time and place, but especially for its reference to the literary preëminence then attained, or confidently expected, on the part of Philadelphia:

"Stretched on the bank of Delaware's rapid stream,
 Stands Philadelphia, not unknown to fame.
 Here the tall vessels safe at anchor ride,
 And Europe's wealth flows in with every tide.

 'Tis here Apollo does erect his throne ;
 This his Parnassus, this his Helicon.
 Here solid sense does every bosom warm ;
 Here noise and nonsense have forgot to charm.
 Thy seers how cautious, and how gravely wise !
 Thy hopeful youth in emulation rise ;
 Who, if the wishing muse inspired does sing,
 Shall liberal arts to such perfection bring,
 Europe shall mourn her ancient fame declined,
 And Philadelphia be the Athens of mankind."³

¹ "Life of Franklin," etc. ed. by John Bigelow, I. 183.

² They appeared in "The Weekly Gazette," beginning with February 4, 1729. It is supposed that Breintnal wrote nearly all after the eighth essay; possibly, also, the sixth and seventh.

³ I cite these lines from the poem as reprinted in "The Hist. Magazine," IV. 344.

A daintier poetic skill was reached by a later poet of Philadelphia, Joseph Shippen, who wrote so well that in his case we experience the unwonted regret that he did not write more. His most famous poem is a love-song, "The Glooms of Ligonier," published in 1759, and popular for many years afterward.¹ He also wrote some graceful verses on seeing a portrait, painted by Benjamin West, of a beautiful young lady. In this poem, having first extolled the exquisite charm of the portrait itself, he is upon the point of charging the artist with an exaggeration of the beauty of the original:

"Yet, sure, his flattering pencil's unsincere ;
His fancy takes the place of bashful truth ;
And warm imagination pictures here
The pride of beauty and the bloom of youth.

Thus had I said, and thus, deluded, thought,
Had lovely Stella still remained unseen,
Whose grace and beauty, to perfection brought,
Make every imitative art look mean."²

About the year 1741, John Webbe published in Philadelphia the first of an intended series of tracts, on the financial questions that agitated the American colonies during many war-making and wasteful years. He entitled his essay, "A Discourse concerning Paper-money." The style is compact and clear; but the literary merit of the production is unimportant by comparison with the argumentative feat that the author professes to have accomplished in it, namely, the demonstration of "a method, plain and easy, for introducing and continuing a plenty" of paper-money, "without lessening the present value of it."

In 1755, Lewis Evans, a surveyor in Pennsylvania, in order to help the public to understand the bearings of the strife, then waxing hot, between the English and

¹ R. W. Griswold, "Poets and Poetry of America," 24.

² *Ibid.* 24.

the French for possession of the American continent, published "A General Map of the Middle British Colonies in America;" and, at the same time, an "Analysis"¹ of the map, in the form of a descriptive and argumentative essay, written with fulness of knowledge, and rising, toward the end, to a statesmanly view of the whole problem then coming to a solution by the two races.

VI.

Probably the most brilliant pulpit-orator produced in the colonial time, south of New England, was Samuel Davies, born in Newcastle County, Delaware, in 1723. His classical education was obtained chiefly at the famous school founded by Samuel Blair, at Fogg's Manor, in Chester County; and there, also, he pursued the study of theology. He began to preach in 1746; and in the following year, he visited Virginia, where his earnestness, his imaginative rhetoric, and his impassioned elocution won for him a sudden and extensive popularity. In 1748, he accepted an invitation to settle in that colony; and during the subsequent five years, what before was popularity deepened into fame and a most benign influence, and filled the whole country. In 1753, in the company of Gilbert Tennent, he went to England to solicit aid for the College of New Jersey. He remained there about eleven months, having great success in his mission, and winning for himself high reputation as an orator. On his return, he resumed his labors in Virginia. In 1759, he succeeded Jonathan Edwards as president of the College of New Jersey; and upon him there fell the fate of speedy death, which, for a time, seemed to be the inevitable portion of those who should accept that office. He died in 1761.

During his life, many of his sermons were published, and were widely diffused. One of them, preached in Vir-

¹ A second ed. was published in the same year.

ginia, in 1755, shortly after the defeat of General Braddock, is remarkable for its prophetic allusion to the destiny of George Washington: "I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, for some important service to his country."¹ Not long after his death, a collection of his sermons was published in three large volumes; and these have been repeatedly printed since that time.²

A glance at any page of these discourses reveals the fact that the author of them was, above all other things, an orator. He prepared his sermons with the utmost care; for he "always thought it to be a most awful thing to go into the pulpit and there speak nonsense in the name of God." What he prepared, however, was meant for the ear rather than for the eye. He had all the physical qualifications for oratory—voice, gesture, temperament; and in appearance he was so commanding that "he looked like the ambassador of some great king." As uttered by himself, these discourses must have been vivid and thrilling orations; but they suffer from the revelations of type. The thought is often loose; the imagery is sometimes confused; the sentences are frequently swollen into verbosity.

As we read, however, some of his eloquent sentences,—for example, these from his sermon on "The General Resurrection,"—we may easily imagine ourselves in the presence of the orator himself, and borne away beyond criticism, on the tide of his heroic faith and his passionate declamation: "They shall come forth. Now methinks I see, I hear, the earth heaving, charnel-houses rattling, tombs bursting, graves opening. Now the nations under ground begin to stir. There is a noise and a shaking

¹ "Sermons" of S. Davies, ed. by W. B. Sprague, III. 101, note.

² One ed. is by Albert Barnes, N. Y. 1841; another by W. B. Sprague, Phila. 1864.

among the dry bones. The dust is all alive, and in motion, and the globe breaks and trembles, as with an earthquake, while this vast army is working its way through and bursting into life. The ruins of human bodies are scattered far and wide, and have passed through many and surprising transformations. A limb in one country, and another in another; here the head and there the trunk, and the ocean rolling between. Multitudes have sunk in a watery grave, been swallowed up by the monsters of the deep, and transformed into a part of their flesh. Multitudes have been eaten by beasts and birds of prey, and incorporated with them; and some have been devoured by their fellow-men in the rage of a desperate hunger, or of unnatural cannibal appetite, and digested into a part of them. Multitudes have mouldered into dust, and this dust has been blown about by winds, and washed away with water, or it has petrified into stone, or been burnt into brick to form dwellings for their posterity; or it has grown up in grain, trees, plants, and other vegetables, which are the support of man and beast, and are transformed into their flesh and blood. But through all these various transformations and changes, not a particle that was essential to one human body has been lost, or incorporated with another human body, so as to become an essential part of it. . . . The omniscient God knows how to collect, distinguish, and compound all those scattered and mingled seeds of our mortal bodies. And now, at the sound of the trumpet, they shall all be collected, wherever they were scattered; all properly sorted and united, however they were confused; atom to its fellow-atom, bone to its fellow-bone. Now methinks you may see the air darkened with fragments of bodies flying from country to country to meet and join their proper parts. . . . Then, my brethren, your dust and mine shall be reanimated and organized. . . . And what a vast improvement will the frail nature of man then receive? Our bodies will then be substantially the same; but how different in qualities, in

strength, in agility, in capacities for pleasure or pain, in beauty or deformity, in glory or terror, according to the moral character of the person to whom they belong! . . . The bodies of the saints will be formed glorious, incorruptible, without the seeds of sickness and death. . . . Then will the body be able to bear up under the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory; it will no longer be a clog or an incumbrance to the soul, but a proper instrument and assistant in all the exalted services and enjoyments of the heavenly state. The bodies of the wicked will also be improved, but their improvements will all be terrible and vindictive. Their capacities will be thoroughly enlarged, but then it will be that they may be made capable of greater misery; they will be strengthened, but it will be that they may bear the heavier load of torment. Their sensations will be more quick and strong, but it will be that they may feel the more exquisite pain. They will be raised immortal that they may not be consumed by everlasting fire, or escape punishment by dissolution or annihilation. In short, their augmented strength, their enlarged capacities, and their immortality, will be their eternal curse; and they would willingly exchange them for the fleeting duration of a fading flower, or the faint sensations of an infant. The only power they would rejoice in is that of self-annihilation."¹

VII.

Upon the fascinating pages of Franklin's "Autobiography," one meets several times the name of an ingenious and philosophical glazier of Philadelphia, named Thomas Godfrey. It was this glazier and his family, who, upon Franklin's return to Philadelphia after his first pilgrimage to London, shared with the economical young printer the space and the expense of his hired house

¹ "Sermons" of S. Davies, ed. by H. B. Sprague, I. 498-502.

"near the market;" it was the wife of this glazier, who, with much feminine diplomacy, tried to make a match between Franklin and one of her own relations, and was so offended at Franklin's intractableness in the affair, that she and her family removed from his house; again, it was the glazier himself who, in 1744, was enrolled as "a mathematician" among the nine original members of the American Philosophical Society.¹

Among the children of this astute and worthy man, was a son, likewise named Thomas, who left such proofs of poetic genius, that his name will always have a prominent place in the story of our colonial literature. The expression of his genius, however, was inadequate; for he had the three misfortunes—stinted education, poverty, an early death. He was born at Philadelphia, in 1736. Being left an orphan at the age of thirteen, he was soon taken from school and apprenticed to a watch-maker—a trade that he did not like. His heart was in music, and especially in poetry; and to these he gave whatever time he could purloin from the business that was to him a servitude. In 1758, having reached his majority, he became a lieutenant in the Pennsylvania militia and served through the campaign that resulted that year in the capture by the English of Fort Duquesne. In 1759, he went to North Carolina, and remained there under engagement as a factor for three years. At the end of that time, being still unsettled, he made journeys to Philadelphia and to New Providence; then returned to North Carolina; and there, on the third of August, 1763, he suddenly died. Two years after his death, his writings, collected and edited by another young poet, Nathaniel Evans, were published at Philadelphia under this title: "Juvenile Poems on Various Subjects; with the Prince of Parthia, a Tragedy."

The poems called "juvenile," doubtless deserve that term. They have no original manner or matter; they are

¹ "Life of Franklin," etc. ed. by John Bigelow, I. 181, 204, 276.

merely tentative and preparatory ; those of them that failed to receive correction from his scholarly friends, reveal, in their imperfect metre, false accent, and false syntax, his own lack of scholarship. The topics are the usual ones in the case of poetic fledglings : " A Cure for Love ;" " Ode on Friendship ;" " A Dithyrambic on Wine." There are also some pastorals, and as many as seven or eight love-songs ; and besides these, an ambitious and not discreditable poem in pentameter couplets, entitled " The Court of Fancy," obviously suggested by Chaucer and Pope.

These alone would not have gained for Thomas Godfrey any remembrance. There is in the volume, however, a tragedy—the first drama, probably, ever produced in this country—that has very considerable merit, and assures us of the presence in him of a constructive genius in poetry from which, very likely, great things would have come, had the stars befriended him.

This poem is in blank verse. It is an oriental story of love and lust, of despotism, ambition, and jealousy. A certain king of Parthia, Artabanus, has three sons. The eldest, Arsaces, is a military hero and an idol of the populace ; he is also the object of consuming envy on the part of the second son, Vardanes, and of loyal affection on the part of the third son, Gotarzes. The first scene is in the temple of the sun, and represents the joy of this youngest son, over a great victory recently gained by the Prince Arsaces in a battle with the Arabians. The second scene represents the envious brother, Vardanes, and his friend Lysias, as talking together of the rage they both felt at the success of Arsaces and at his enormous popularity. In the course of this conversation, it appears that Vardanes is in love with a beautiful Arabian captive, named Evanthe, who, however, is betrothed to Arsaces. The third scene introduces the queen, Thermusa, who reveals to an attendant her hatred of Arsaces and her desire for his destruction ; likewise, her wrath at the beautiful captive, Evanthe, with whom the king himself has fallen in love. In the

fourth scene, Evanthe herself appears, and talks with her maid, Cleone, of the popular enthusiasm for her beloved Arsaces, and of her own eagerness for his return :

“How tedious are the hours which bring him
To my fond, panting heart ! For oh, to those
Who live in expectation of the bliss,
Time slowly creeps, and every tardy minute
Seems mocking of their wishes. Say, Cleone,—
For you beheld the triumph,—midst his pomp,
Did he not seem to curse the empty show,
The pageant greatness—enemy to love—
Which held him from Evanthe ? Haste to tell me,
And feed my greedy ear with the fond tale.”

In this conversation, while waiting for her lover, Evanthe tells the story of her early life and of her captivity. Her father, a high officer at court, and a great general,

“was reputed,
Brave, wise, and loyal ; by his prince beloved.
Oft has he led his conquering troops, and forced
From frowning Victory her awful honors.”

One day, while

“bathing in Niphate's silver stream,
Attended only by one favorite maid,
As we were sporting on the wanton waves,
Swift from the wood a troop of horsemen rushed ;
Rudely they seized and bore me trembling off.
In vain Edessa with her shrieks assailed
The heavens ; for heaven was deaf to both our prayers.”

Her captor, a cruel and lustful wretch, was afterward killed in battle by Arsaces, and thus Evanthe fell into his gallant keeping. In this scene, hearing that other Arabian captives had been brought in from the recent battle, she desires to get news of her father. The fifth scene presents the king in state, surrounded by his princes and officers, and in the act of reproaching a brave Arabian captive, named Bethas, who is before him in chains. To the king's hard words, Bethas answers :

" True I am fallen, but glorious was my fall ;
 The day was bravely fought ; we did our best ;
 But victory's of heaven. Look o'er yon field.
 See if thou findest one Arabian back
 Disfigured with dishonorable wounds !
 No, here, deep on their bosoms, are engraved
 The marks of honor ! 'Twas through here their souls
 Flew to their blissful seats. Oh ! why did I
 Survive the fatal day ? To be this slave—
 To be the gaze and sport of vulgar crowds ;
 Thus, like a shackled tiger, stalk my round,
 And grimly lower upon the shouting herd.
 Ye Gods !—

KING.

Away with him to instant death.

ARSACES.

Hear me, my lord. Oh, not on this bright day—
 Let not this day of joy blush with his blood ;
 Nor count his steady loyalty a crime ;
 But give him life. Arsaces humbly asks it,
 And may you e'er be served with honest hearts."¹

The king grants the request of his eldest son, and Bethas is sent to prison. Thus closes the first Act. The second Act opens with a scene wherein the malignant brother, Vardanes, is contriving with Lysias a plot to destroy Arsaces. Their plan is to induce the king to believe that Arsaces is intending to slay him and to win the throne, and that the intercession of the prince on behalf of Bethas was for the purpose of securing the help of that great soldier. The talk of the two conspirators is by night, and in the gloomy prison, of which Lysias has charge ; and it proceeds in the midst of a fearful storm :

" VARDANES.

Heavens ! what a night is this !

LYSIAS.

'Tis filled with terror ;
 Some dread event beneath this horror lurks,

¹ " Juvenile Poems," etc. 120-121.

Ordained by fate's irrevocable doom,—
Perhaps Arsaces' fall; and angry heaven
Speaks it in thunder to the trembling world.

VARDANES.

Terror indeed ! It seems as sickening Nature
Had given her order up to general ruin :
The heavens appear as one continued flame ;
Earth with her terror shakes ; dim night retires,
And the red lightning gives a dreadful day,
While in the thunder's voice each sound is lost.
Fear sinks the panting heart in every bosom ;
E'en the pale dead, affrighted at the horror,
As though unsafe, start from their marble jails,
And howling through the streets are seeking shelter.

.

LYSIAS.

I saw a flash stream through the angry clouds,
And bend its course to where a stately pine
Behind the garden stood ; quickly it seized
And wrapped it in a fiery fold ; the trunk
Was shivered into atoms, and the branches
Off were lopped, and wildly scattered.

VARDANES.

Why rage the elements ? They are not cursed
Like me ! Evanthe frowns not angry on them ;
The wind may play upon her beauteous bosom,
Nor fear her chiding ; light can bless her sense,
And in the floating mirror she beholds
Those beauties which can fetter all mankind.

.

LYSIAS.

My lord, forget her ; tear her from your breast.
Who, like the Phoenix, gazes on the sun,
And strives to soar up to the glorious blaze,
Should never leave ambition's brightest object,
To turn, and view the beauties of a flower.

VARDANES.

O Lysias, chide no more, for I have done.
Yes, I'll forget the proud disdainful beauty ;
Hence with vain love :—ambition, now, alone,

Shall guide my actions. Since mankind delights
To give me pain, I'll study mischief too,
And shake the earth, e'en like this raging tempest.

LYSIAS.

A night like this, so dreadful to behold,—
Since my remembrance' birth, I never saw.

VARDANES.

E'en such a night, dreadful as this, they say,
My teeming mother gave me to the world.
Whence by those sages who, in knowledge rich,
Can pry into futurity, and tell
What distant ages will produce of wonder,
My days were deemed to be a hurricane.

.

LYSIAS.

Then, haste to raise the tempest.
My soul disdains this one eternal round,
Where each succeeding day is like the former.
Trust me, my noble prince, here is a heart
Steady and firm to all your purposes ;
And here's a hand that knows to execute
Whate'er designs thy daring breast can form,
Nor ever shake with fear."

It is on this conspiracy, hatched by night and amid the storm, that the plot turns. From that point, the action moves on swiftly; the entanglements and cross-purposes and astute villanies are well presented; Bethas proves to be the father of Evanthe; the conspirators nearly succeed; they murder the king and are about to murder Arsaces and Bethas, and they have Evanthe in their power, when suddenly, the youngest brother arrives with a great army. A battle is fought in the streets of the city. Evanthe sends Cleone to a tower to see how the contest is going, and especially, to ascertain the fate of Arsaces. Cleone sees a hero slain, whom she mistakes for Arsaces, and rushes down with the dreadful news. Upon this, Evanthe

takes poison; Arsaces, who has won the battle, rushes in, and the beautiful maiden dies in his arms. At once he kills himself; and the kingdom passes to the loyal and loving brother, Gotarzes.

The whole drama is powerful in diction and in action. Of course, there are blemishes in it,—faults of inexperience and of imperfect culture: but it has many noble poetic passages; the characters are firmly and consistently developed; there are scenes of pathos and tragic vividness; the plot advances with rapid movement and with culminating force. Thomas Godfrey was a true poet; and “The Prince of Parthia” is a noble beginning of dramatic literature in America.

VIII.

On the tenth of May, 1762, David Hume writing from Edinburgh to Benjamin Franklin in London, used these words: “I am very sorry that you intend soon to leave our hemisphere. America has sent us many good things,—gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, indigo, and so forth; but you are the first philosopher, and indeed the first great man of letters, for whom we are beholden to her.”¹ Even eight years before that time, an eminent French scholar, in sending to Franklin, at Philadelphia, the greetings of Buffon, Fonferrière, Marty, and the other great savans of Paris, had added this testimony,—“Your name is venerated in this country.”²

Thus, before the close of its colonial epoch, America had produced one man of science and of letters who had reached cosmopolitan fame. Yet, within the period here treated of, the renown of Franklin was that of a great scientific experimenter, rather than of a great writer. He had, indeed, very early in life acquired that mastery of style—that pure, pithy, racy, and delightful diction—which

¹ Works of Franklin, VI. 244.

² Ibid. 194.

he never lost, and which makes him still one of the great exemplars of modern English prose. He had, likewise, before 1765, written many of his best productions;—essays on politics, commerce, education, science, religion, and the conduct of life; multitudes of wise and witty scraps of literature for his newspaper, his almanacs, and his friends; anecdotes, apologues, maxims; above all, many of those incomparable letters for his private correspondents, to the reading of which, since then, the whole world has been admitted, greatly to its advantage in wisdom and in happiness. Nevertheless, all his writings had been composed for some immediate purpose, and if printed at all, had been first printed separately, and as a general thing without the author's name. In 1751, however, a partial collection of his writings was published in London without his knowledge,—the book consisting of the papers on electricity sent by him to his friend, Peter Collinson. But these papers, valuable and even celebrated as they were as contributions to science, could give to the public no idea of the various and the marvellous powers of Franklin as a contributor to literature.

At the close of our colonial epoch, Benjamin Franklin, then fifty-nine years of age, was the most illustrious of Americans, and one of the most illustrious of men; and his renown rested on permanent and benign achievements of the intellect. He was, at that time, on the verge of old age; his splendid career as a scientific discoverer and as a citizen seemed rounding to its full; yet there then lay outstretched before him—though he knew it not—still another career of just twenty-five years; in which his political services to his country and to mankind were to bring him more glory than he had gained from all he had done before; and in which he was to write one book—the story of his own life—that is still the most famous production in American literature, that has an imperishable charm for all classes of mankind, that has passed into nearly all the literary languages of the globe, and that is “one of the

half-dozen most widely popular books ever printed.”¹ It will be most profitable for us to defer our minute study of the literary character of this great writer, until, in a subsequent volume of this work, we can view his literary career as a whole.

¹ John Bigelow, in “Life of Franklin,” etc. I. 26.

CHAPTER XVII.

LITERATURE IN MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, AND THE SOUTH.

I. MARYLAND.

- I.—Ebenezer Cook, Gentleman—A rough satirist—His "Sot-Weed Factor"—Outline of the poem—Lively sketches of early Maryland life—Hospitality—Manners—Indians—A court-scene—Encounter with a Quaker and a lawyer—Swindled by both—His curse upon Maryland—His "Sot-Weed Redivivus."

2. VIRGINIA.

- I.—James Blair, the true founder of literary culture in Virginia—His coming to Virginia—Forcible qualities of the man—His zeal for education—Founds the College of William and Mary—First president of it—The Commencement celebration in 1700—His writings—"The Present State of Virginia and the College"—His published discourses on the Sermon on the Mount—His literary qualities—Passages from his sermons.
- II.—Robert Beverley—Parentage—Education in England—His study of the history of Virginia—How he came to write it—The blunders of Oldmixon—Reception of Beverley's book—The author himself seen in it—A noble Virginian—A friend of the Indians—His love of nature—His style—Humor—Hatred of indolence—Virginia hospitality and comfort—Calumnies upon its climate.
- III.—Hugh Jones, clergyman, teacher, and school-book maker—His "Present State of Virginia"—Objects of the book—Its range—Its sarcasms upon the other colonies—Its criticisms upon Virginia—Suggestions for improvement.
- IV.—William Byrd of Westover—His princely fortune and ways—His culture—Foreign travel—Public spirit—His writings—"History of the Dividing Line"—The humor and literary grace of the book—Amusing sketch of early history of Virginia—The Christian duty of marrying Indian women—Sarcasms upon North Carolina—Notices of plants, animals, and forest-life—The praise of ginseng—His "Progress to the Mines"—His "Journey to the Land of Eden."
- V.—William Stith—Various utilities of his life—His "History of Virginia"—Defects of the work—Its good qualities—Bitter description of James the First.

3. NORTH CAROLINA.

- I.—John Lawson—His picture of Charleston in 1700—His journey to North Carolina—What he saw and heard by the way—Becomes surveyor-general

of North Carolina—His descriptions of that province—Its coast—Sir Walter Raleigh's ship—A land of Arcadian delight—The playful alligator—A study of Indians—Amiability and beauty of their women—An ancient squaw—A conjuror—Indian self-possession—The author's fate—His "History of North Carolina."

4. SOUTH CAROLINA.

I.—Alexander Garden, rector of St. Philip's, Charleston—The force of his character—Greatness of his influence—His abhorrence of Whitefield—His sermons and letters against Whitefield—Their bitterness and their literary merit.

5. GEORGIA.

I.—Georgia's entrance into our literature—A conflict with Oglethorpe—The expert and witty book of Patrick Tailfer and others—"A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia"—Outline of it—A masterly specimen of satire—Its mock dedication to Oglethorpe.

I. MARYLAND.

I.

A VEIN of genuine and powerful satire was struck in Maryland in the early part of the eighteenth century by a writer calling himself "Ebenezer Cook, Gentleman." Who he was, what he was, whence he came, whither he went,—are facts that now baffle us. His book is an obvious extravaganza; and the autobiographic narrative involved in the plot, is probably only a part of its robust and jocular mirth. It is entitled, "The Sot-Weed Factor; or, A Voyage to Maryland,—a satire, in which is described the laws, government, courts, and constitutions of the country, and also the buildings, feasts, frolics, entertainments, and drunken humors of the inhabitants in that part of America."

The author pretends to be an Englishman, under doom of emigrating to America:

"Condemned by fate to wayward curse
Of friends unkind and empty purse,—
Plagues worse than filled Pandora's box,—
I took my leave of Albion's rocks ;

With heavy heart concerned, that I
 Was forced my native soil to fly,
 And the old world must bid good-bye.

 Freight with fools, from Plymouth sound
 To Maryland our ship was bound."¹

After a three months' voyage, they arrived in Maryland. Intending "to open store," he brought on shore his goods, and at once the "sot-weed factors," or tobacco agents, swarmed around him :

"In shirts and drawers of Scotch cloth blue,
 With neither stockings, hat, nor shoe,
 These sot-weed planters crowd the shore,
 In hue as tawny as a Moor.
 Figures so strange, no god designed
 To be a part of human kind;
 But wanton nature, void of rest,
 Moulded the brittle clay in jest."²

He wonders who and what they are :

"At last a fancy very odd
 Took me, this was the land of Nod ;
 Planted at first when vagrant Cain
 His brother had unjustly slain ;
 Then conscious of the crime he'd done,
 From vengeance dire he hither run ;

 And ever since his time, the place
 Has harbored a detested race,
 Who when they could not live at home
 For refuge to these worlds did roam ;
 In hopes by flight they might prevent
 The devil and his full intent,
 Obtain from triple-tree reprieve,
 And heaven and hell alike deceive."³

He thinks it best to give an account of his entertainment,

¹ "The Sot-Weed Factor," I.

² Ibid. 2.

³ Ibid. 2.

"That strangers well may be aware on
 What homely diet they must fare on,
 To touch that shore where no good sense is found,
 But conversation's lost and manner's drowned."¹

He crosses the river in a canoe; after some trouble, he finds in a cottage lodging and rough but cordial hospitality. This leads him to describe his host, the furniture, the customs of the house, and his own futile attempts at sleeping that night—pestered by mosquitoes and so forth. After breakfast, he is kindly sent on his journey, and goes to a place called Battletown. On his way he meets an Indian:

"No mortal creature can express
 His wild fantastic air and dress.

 His manly shoulders, such as please
 Widows and wives, were bathed in grease
 Of cub and bear."²

He proceeds on his journey, discussing with his companion the origin of Indians; and at last he reaches a place where court is in session, and a great crowd of strange people are assembled:

"Our horses to a tree we tied,
 And forward passed among the rout
 To choose convenient quarters out;
 But being none were to be found,
 We sat like others on the ground,
 Carousing punch in open air,
 Till crier did the court declare.
 The planting rabble being met,
 Their drunken worships being likewise set,
 Crier proclaims that noise should cease,
 And straight the lawyers broke the peace.
 Wrangling for plaintiff and defendant,
 I thought they ne'er would make an end on't,
 With nonsense, stuff, and false quotations,
 With brazen lies and allegations;

¹ "The Sot-Weed Factor," 2-3.

² *Ibid.* 8.

And in the splitting of the cause,
 They used such motions with their paws,
 As showed their zeal was strongly bent
 In blows to end the argument."¹

A *mêlée* ensues, in which judges, jury, clients and all take a hand; and thus the court breaks up for that session:

"The court adjourned in usual manner,
 With battle, blood, and fractious clamor."²

The poet then describes the scenes of riot, debauchery, fighting, and robbery that filled the next night; tells how he lost his shoes, his stockings, his hat, and wig, how his friend was also stripped, and how after getting supplied anew, he and his friend rode away in disgust to the home of the latter:

"There with good punch and apple-juice
 We spent our hours without abuse,
 Till midnight in her sable vest
 Persuaded gods and men to rest."³

After various other experiences, he thinks it time to sell his wares:

"To this intent, with guide before,
 I tripped it to the Eastern Shore.
 While riding near a sandy bay,
 I met a Quaker, yea and nay;
 A pious, conscientious rogue,
 As e'er wore bonnet or a brogue;
 Who neither swore nor kept his word,
 But cheated in the fear of God;
 And when his debts he would not pay,
 By Light Within he ran away."⁴

By this drab scoundrel the poet is basely swindled; and in his rage he goes to a lawyer, who was also a doctor,

"an ambidexter quack
 Who learnedly had got the knack

¹ "The Sot-Weed Factor," 12. ² *Ibid.* 13. ³ *Ibid.* 15. ⁴ *Ibid.* 18.

Of giving glisters, making pills,
 Of filling bonds, and forging wills,
 And with a stock of impudence,
 Supplied his want of wit and sense ;
 With looks demure amazing people ;
 No wiser than a daw in steeple."

To this versatile gentleman the poet offers a great fee:

" And of my money was so lavish,
 That he'd have poisoned half the parish,
 And hanged his father on a tree,
 For such another tempting fee."¹

In the litigation which followed, the author is cheated by his lawyer even worse than he had been by the Quaker; and at last, mad with rage, he hurries away from the country, leaving this curse upon it as his legacy:

" May cannibals, transported over sea,
 Prey on these shores as they have done on me ;
 May never merchant's trading sails explore
 This cruel, this inhospitable shore ;
 But left abandoned by the world to starve,
 May they sustain the fate they well deserve.
 May they turn savage ; or, as Indians wild,
 From trade, converse, and happiness exiled,
 Recreant to heaven, may they adore the sun,
 And into pagan superstitions run,
 For vengeance ripe ;
 May wrath divine then lay these regions waste,
 Where no man's faithful, and no woman's chaste."²

This work was published in London, a quarto of twenty-one pages, in 1708.³ Twenty-two years afterward, a writer, professing to be the same rough satirist, published at Annapolis another poem, entitled "Sot-Weed Redivivus; or, The Planter's Looking-Glass, in burlesque verse, calculated for the meridian of Maryland,"—a quarto of twenty-

¹ "The Sot-Weed Factor," 19.

² *Ibid.* 20-21.

³ Reprinted in 1866 in "Shea's Early Southern Tracts," edited by Brantz Mayer, who says that the poem was reprinted at Annapolis in 1731, with an additional poem on Bacon's Rebellion.

eight pages. The first poem has, indeed, an abundance of filth and scurrility, but it has wit besides; the second poem lacks only the wit.

2. VIRGINIA.

I.

Probably no other man in the colonial time did so much for the intellectual life of Virginia, as did the sturdy and faithful clergyman, James Blair, who came into the colony in 1685, and who died there in 1743, having been a missionary of the Church of England fifty-eight years, the commissary of the Bishop of London fifty-four years, the president of the College of William and Mary fifty years, and a member of the king's council fifty years.

Born in Scotland in 1656, and graduated at the University of Edinburgh in 1673, he was rector of Cranston until the year 1682, when he went into England in the hope of finding preferment there; but was induced by the Bishop of London to give up his life to the service of God and of man in Virginia.

On his arrival there, he was pained not only at the disorderly and ineffective condition of the church, but at the almost universal neglect of education. Henceforward, the story of his life is a story of pure and tireless labors for the rectification of both these evils. He was a man of great simplicity and force of character, very positive, very persistent, with an abundance of Scottish shrewdness as well as of Scottish enthusiasm, actuated by a lofty, apostolic determination to be useful to his fellow-creatures—whether, at the moment, they liked it or not. “He could not rest until school-teachers were in the land;”¹ and he did not rest until there was a college in the land, also. For the latter, he toiled mightily, and with invincible hopefulness. First, he induced the Virginians themselves to put their names to subscriptions for a college, to the

¹ Edward D. Neill, “Notes on the Va. Colonial Clergy,” 23.

amount of twenty-five hundred pounds sterling. Next, having secured for the plan of a college the approbation of the colonial assembly, he crossed the ocean, and against all official resistance gained for it the approbation of the monarchs of England also,—in whose honor the little college was named William and Mary. Then, returning to Virginia in 1693, with a royal charter for the college and a royal endowment, the indefatigable man laid its foundations, and he served it with dauntless fidelity the next fifty years. In the year 1700, the Commencement was celebrated there with much *éclat*: "There was a great concourse of people. Several planters came thither in coaches, and others in sloops from New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland,—it being a new thing in that part of America to hear graduates perform their exercises. The Indians themselves had the curiosity, some of them, to visit Williamsburg upon that occasion; and the whole country rejoiced as if they had some relish of learning."¹

Thus, James Blair may be called the creator of the healthiest and the most extensive intellectual influence that was felt in the southern group of colonies before the Revolution. Moreover, his direct contributions to American literature were by no means despicable. He was, probably, the principal writer of a book upon the title-page of which the names of Henry Hartwell and Edward Chilton are joined with his own, and which was published in London in 1727: "The Present State of Virginia and the College." It is expertly written; is neat and vigorous in style; abounds in facts respecting the condition of civilization in the colony at that time; and is not lacking in the courage of plain speech: "As to all the natural advantages of a country," Virginia "is one of the best, but as to the improved ones, one of the worst, of all the English plantations in America. When one considers the wholesomeness of its air, the fertility of its soil, the com-

¹ C. Campbell, "Hist. Va." 361-362.

modiousness of its navigable rivers and creeks, the openness of its coast all the year long, the conveniency of its fresh-water runs and springs, the plenty of its fish, fowl, and wild beasts, the variety of its simples and dyeing-woods, the abundance of its timbers, minerals, wild vines, and fruits, the temperature of its climate; . . . in short, if it be looked upon in all respects as it came out of the hand of God, it is certainly one of the best countries in the world. But, on the other hand, if we enquire for well-built towns, for convenient ports and markets, for plenty of ships and seamen, for well-improved trades and manufactures, for well-educated children, for an industrious and thriving people, or for an happy government in church and state, and in short for all the other advantages in human improvements, it is certainly, for all these things, one of the poorest, miserablest, and worst countries in all America, that is inhabited by Christians."¹

But James Blair's chief claim to remembrance in our literary history is based upon a series of one hundred and seventeen discourses on "Our Saviour's Divine Sermon on the Mount," which were twice published in London during the author's lifetime, and which received public applause from the great English theologian, Daniel Waterland.² In these discourses the range of topics is as wide as that of the wonderful discourse upon which they are founded. The thought is fully wrought out; the divisions are sharp and formal; each discourse is short and to the point. The tone of the author's mind is moderate, judicial, charitable, catholic; he is not brilliant; his style is smooth, simple, honest, earnest; there is no display; he is trying to make people good. The drift of his argument is steadily toward practical results. "An error in morals,"

¹ "The Present State," etc. 1-2.

² First published in London in 1722 in five vols.; republished there in 1740 in four vols., with a preface by Dr. Waterland. The work is extremely rare in this country. I have used the incomplete copy of the second ed. in the State Library at Albany.

he says, "is more dangerous than a mere speculative error. . . . It is only the practical errors, the transgressions of morality, which our Saviour degrades into the lowest rank. . . . Speculative errors, which have no influence on the life and conversation, cannot be near so dangerous as those errors which lead men out of the way of their duty. As in a voyage at sea, the master and seamen and passengers may chance to see several objects, and very friendly and innocently may differ in their opinions about the names, and natures, and colors, and shapes, and properties of them; and yet none of all these opinions, the most true or the most erroneous, either furthers or hinders their voyage. But if they should be in an error in using a bad compass, or in not knowing the tides and currents, the rocks and shelves: if they should run rashly on the shore in the night-time, by not keeping a right reckoning, thinking themselves far enough from land;—these are errors of fatal consequence, such as may endanger the ship and voyage. Just so it is in errors of opinion."¹

While he insists upon the highest excellence in outward conduct, he shows that all moral significance attaches to the inward state of a man: "It is the great secret of Christian morals, which our Saviour drives at in all duties whatsoever, and is the principal thing which distinguishes the righteousness of a good Christian, from the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees."² "Particularly, has Christ interpreted the law in a more spiritual sense, killing vice in the seed, and strictly forbidding the feeding the very thoughts and imaginations with it. Then, let us employ a great part of our care in the good government of our heart and thoughts, that when wicked fancies or imaginations start up in our minds, or are thrown in by the Devil, we may take care not to harbor them, but to throw them quickly out, before they sprout out into bad resolutions and designs, or ripen into wicked actions and evil habits."³

¹ Discourses, II. 48-49.

² Ibid. III. 67.

³ Ibid. II. 24-25.

II.

Virginia had been in existence a hundred years before it produced an historian of its own. This was Robert Beverley, of an ancient family in England, himself born in Virginia. His father, likewise Robert Beverley, a man of considerable fortune at Beverley in Yorkshire, had removed to the colony in time to become a prominent politician in 1676, acting resolutely, amid the tumults of that year, on the side of Sir William Berkeley against Nathaniel Bacon. The younger Beverley was sent to England for his education; and early in life seems to have been employed by his father and an elder brother as assistant in charge of the colonial records. This circumstance turned his thoughts toward the study of his country's history.¹ Happening to be in London in 1703, his bookseller told him of a new work just then in press,—Oldmixon's "*British Empire in America*,"—and gave him for inspection, the sheets relating to Virginia and Carolina. These sheets the young Virginian began to read, with his pen in hand for the purpose of jotting down any corrections that might be necessary; but he soon gave up that task in despair,—the new book being quite beyond the reach of correction. Prompted by this experience, and having with him his own memoranda of studies upon the subject, Beverley at once undertook to write a history of his native colony. This was first published in London, in 1705; was published in a French translation, both at Paris and at Amsterdam, in 1707; and was brought out in London in a second English edition, much enlarged and improved, in 1722.²

The traits of the man confront us on every page of this book. He had large wealth in lands, in houses, and in slaves, high social position, intense affection for Virginia, a sturdy pride in it; and he was as independent in mind as he was

¹ Pref. to "*Hist. Va.*" xvii.

² Reprinted in 1855 at Richmond, with introduction by Charles Campbell.

in circumstances. The robust virtues—simplicity, thrift, industry, enterprise, economy—had not died out of him in the soft air of Virginia. He lived upon his great estate with Spartan plainness;¹ and in his book he never misses the opportunity of rasping his countrymen for their luxury, their supineness, and the indolent use they were making of the overflowing bounties of nature. He gives first the history of the colony, then an account of the country itself, then a description of the Indians, finally a picture of the political and industrial condition of the colony in his own time. He writes not like a book-man or a theorist, but like a country-gentleman and a man of affairs. He speaks out plainly what he thinks; he has respect to limits, never loses himself in pedantries or long stories; he interprets all things, past and present, with shrewd, practical sense. In his style there is no flavor of classical study, or even of modern letters; yet it has the promptness, lucidity, and raciness of real talk among educated men of the world. It continues to be interesting. In some places, his history degenerates into a partisan pamphlet; for he inherited his father's hate of the Virginia governors,—Lord Culpepper and the Earl of Effingham,—having also a plenty of hate on his own account for Francis Nicholson. He is not heedless of accuracy; yet he has not a few errors. He knew the Indians well: in fact, in his first edition he identified himself with them by playfully calling himself an Indian; and the portion of his book devoted to them is written with love of the subject and full mastery of it. All his notices of natural objects also, are sharp and full. His eye was quick to see the characteristics of all sorts of dumb creatures, in the midst of whose haunts he passed his manly life; as may be illustrated in his graphic and amusing stories of the snake in the act of charming and swallowing a hare,² and of the fish-hawk pursued by a bald eagle.³

¹ Descriptions of his home in 1715 may be read in James Fontaine's "*Memoirs of a Huguenot Family*," 265.

² "*Hist. Va.*" 245-246.

³ *Ibid.* 121.

The whole work is fresh, original; not weighed down by documents; the living testimony of a proud and generous Virginian. Without apparent effort, he often hits upon strong and happy phrases, as when he speaks of "the almighty power of gold"—anticipating the more famous expression of Washington Irving. There is a tonic enjoyment in his under-flavor of humor and in his crisp sarcasms. He expresses a sort of contemptuous surprise at the "prodigious phantasms" with respect to Virginia, which he found cherished among the English; as, "that the servants in Virginia are made to draw in cart, and plough as horses and oxen do in England, and that the country turns all people black who go to live there."¹ As to his own country, he has a smile of quiet ridicule for its military development: "The militia are the only standing forces in Virginia. They are happy in the enjoyment of an everlasting peace, which their poverty and want of towns secure to them."² But if their military power was small, their hospitality certainly was not small; and he speaks of it with satisfaction: "The inhabitants are very courteous to travellers, who need no other recommendation but the being human creatures. A stranger has no more to do but to inquire upon the road where any gentleman or good housekeeper lives; and there he may depend upon being received with hospitality. This good nature is so general among their people, that the gentry when they go abroad order their principal servant to entertain all visitors with everything the plantation affords. And the poor planters who have but one bed will often sit up, or lie upon a form or couch all night, to make room for a weary traveller to repose himself after his journey. If there happen to be a churl that, either out of covetousness or ill nature, won't comply with this generous custom, he has a mark of infamy set upon him, and is abhorred by all."³ The author exults in the fact that "nobody is poor enough

¹ "Hist. Va." Pref. xvii.² Ibid. 217.³ Ibid. 258.

to beg or want food ;" but checks himself with the confession, that "they have abundance of people that are lazy enough to deserve it. I remember the time when five pounds was left by a charitable testator to the poor of the parish he lived in ; and it lay nine years before the executors could find one poor enough to accept of this legacy ; but at last it was given to an old woman."¹ When he thinks of the charms of the climate of Virginia, he is indignant at the calumnies heaped upon it by those English merchants who had visited it, but who, with insular obstinacy, persisted there in all the habits that they were used to in a very different climate : "Many of the merchants and others that go thither from England, make no distinction between a cold and hot country ; but wisely go sweltering about in their thick clothes all the summer, because forsooth they used to do so in their northern climate ; and then unfairly complain of the heat of the country. They greedily surfeit with their delicious fruits, and are guilty of great intemperance therein, through the exceeding plenty thereof, and liberty given by the inhabitants ; by which means they fall sick, and then unjustly complain of the unhealthiness of the country. In the next place, the sailors, for want of towns there, were put to the hardship of rolling most of the tobacco a mile or more to the water-side ; this splinters their hands sometimes, and provokes them to curse the country. Such exercise and a bright sun made them hot, and then they imprudently fell to drinking cold water, or perhaps new cider, which in its season they found in every planter's house ; or else they greedily devour the green fruit and unripe trash they met with, and so fell into fluxes, fevers, and the bellyache ; and then, to spare their own indiscretion, they in their tarpaulin language cry, God d—n the country."²

¹ "Hist. Va." 223.

² Ibid. 241.

III.

In 1724, there came out in London a book of a hundred and fifty-one pages, entitled "The Present State of Virginia." Its author was a Virginia clergyman, Hugh Jones, born in England, but naturalized in the new world by a life of versatile and energetic usefulness there; rector of Jamestown, mathematical professor in William and Mary College, and chaplain to the colonial assembly. He was one of the earliest Americans to appease the demand for elementary text-books in our schools, serving well the advancing generations by his "English Grammar," his "Accidence to Mathematics," and his "Accidence to Christianity." His book on Virginia, which appears to have been published during some visit of the author to the mother-country, evidently had a philanthropic intention. He sets forth the condition of Virginia up to latest dates, in the hope of arousing and directing a more intelligent coöperation in England with the efforts of good men in the new world who were trying to build up there a prosperous and benign commonwealth. His book is that of an earnest, downright, and rather original man, intent on getting some good done in his part of the world, and having clear views as to the methods of doing it. He describes frankly the sort of material then extant in Virginia to make a nation of—Indians, negroes, Englishmen; its next door neighbors, also—the North Carolinians and the Marylanders; likewise, the schemes he had formed for promoting learning, religion, and trade in those regions. It is a book of solid facts and solid suggestions, written in a plain, positive style, just sufficiently tinged with the gentlemanly egotism of a Virginian and of a Churchman.

His eulogiums upon his adopted colony are not incapable of a sarcastic edge when turned toward the other colonies in America: "If New England be called a receptacle of dissenters, and an Amsterdam of religion, Pennsylvania

the nurse of Quakers, Maryland the retirement of Roman Catholics, North Carolina the refuge of runaways, and South Carolina the delight of buccaneers and pirates, Virginia may be justly esteemed the happy retreat of true Britons and true Churchmen."¹

Yet he is nowhere blind to the blemishes of his own noble colony and its people; he particularly sees its weakness in the great matters of popular education, individual discipline, public spirit, industry, and the like. The Virginians themselves, he tells us, "have good natural notions and will soon learn arts and sciences; but are generally diverted, by business or inclination, from profound study and prying into the depth of things. . . . Through their quick apprehension they have a sufficiency of knowledge and fluency of tongue, though their learning for the most part be but superficial. They are more inclinable to read men by business and conversation, than to dive into books." "As for education, several are sent to England for it." "The common planters, leading easy lives, don't much admire labor or any manly exercise except horse-racing, nor diversion except cock-fighting. . . . This easy way of living and the heat of the summer makes some very lazy, who are then said to be climate-struck." "They are such lovers of riding, that almost every ordinary person keeps a horse; and I have known some spend the morning in ranging several miles in the woods to find and catch their horses, only to ride two or three miles to church, to the court-house, or to a horse-race."²

He laments the poverty and consequent ineffectiveness of the College of William and Mary: "For it is now a college without a chapel, without a scholarship, and without a statute; there is a library without books, comparatively speaking; and a president without a fixed salary till of late."³

¹ "The Present State of Va." 43.

² *Ibid.* 44, 45, 48, 49.

³ *Ibid.* 83.

He makes valuable suggestions for the religious improvement of Virginia, and draws portraits of the sort of clergymen who are needed there : not " quarrelsome and litigious ministers who would differ with their parishioners about insignificant trifles," nor " mere scholars and stoics," nor " zealots too rigid in outward appearance," but pure, devout, sensible, and friendly men, fitted to deal successfully with a warm-hearted and high-spirited people who " are for moderate views neither high nor low," and who " never refuse to shout,

God bless the church, and George its defender,
Convert the fanatics, and balk the Pretender."¹

IV.

Perhaps the most accomplished and the wittiest Virginian of the colonial time was William Byrd of Westover, a man of princely fortune and of princely ways. He was born in the colony in 1674, and died there in 1744. His father, having the same name, had come to Virginia in early life ; had founded a great estate there ; during the latter part of the seventeenth century, had been conspicuous in public affairs ; and finding this son to be endowed with every personal quality corresponding to the great position that awaited him in life, had given him the amplest training in the schools and in the society of Europe. He was educated in England, under the particular care of Sir Robert Southwell ; " was called to the bar in the Middle Temple ; studied for some time in the Low Countries ; visited the court of France ; and was chosen Fellow of the Royal Society." In England, he had " the acquaintance of many of the first persons of the age for knowledge, wit, virtue, birth, or high station, and, particularly, contracted a most intimate and bosom friendship with the learned and illustrious Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery."²

¹ " The Present State of Va." 95-96.

² " Byrd Manuscripts," I. xi.

On returning to his native land, he entered upon a long career of public and private usefulness. He was made receiver-general of the king's revenues; for thirty-seven years he was a member of the council, and at last its president; three times he was sent as the agent of Virginia to the court of England; he founded the two famous cities of Richmond and Petersburg; as the proprietor of tracts of land vast enough for a royal domain, he was active in the development of the agricultural and mineral resources of the colony; best of all, he was "the constant enemy of all exorbitant power, and hearty friend to the liberties of his country."¹ His course in private life was equally brilliant and attractive. On his estate at Westover he lived in a style of great magnificence. He was a student of science, a man of wit, of letters, of elegant tastes; and he had "the best and most copious collection of books"² in that part of America.

Of course, such a man, absorbed by manifold engagements, and living in a whirl of gayety and of hospitable pleasures, was not likely to devote himself to any deliberate literary work. Yet his mind was an active and fertile one; and stirred by outward incidents, he dashed off two or three bits of writing that have extraordinary merit,—representing the geniality of his nature, his wit, and the facility and grace of his style.

In the early part of the year 1729, in obedience to an appointment by the governor of Virginia, William Byrd joined an expedition for fixing the dividing line between that colony and North Carolina. The party consisted of two other commissioners for Virginia, the commissioners for North Carolina, a chaplain, several surveyors, and numerous attendants and laborers. The expedition occupied six weeks in the spring of that year; it was then abandoned on account of the hot weather; and being resumed in the autumn, it occupied ten weeks more. Beginning at

¹ "Byrd Manuscripts," I. xi.

² Wm. Stith, "Hist. Va." Pref. v.

a point on the sea-coast, the line was run westward six hundred miles, through the Great Dismal Swamp, through "marshes . . . and great waters," "over steep hills, craggy rocks, and thickets hardly penetrable." Of the two expeditions that accomplished this labor, William Byrd kept a journal, which, after lying in manuscript upwards of a century, was first published in 1841, under the title given to it by its author,—*"The History of the Dividing Line."*¹

In the peculiar qualities that distinguish this little book, it is almost unique in our colonial age; and it is, without question, one of the most delightful of the literary legacies which that age has handed down to ours. Here we have the off-hand, daily jottings of a very clever Virginia gentleman of the early time, who has travelled much, read much, been long in the best company; and who, with a gayety that will not yield to any hardship or vexation, travels for several weeks through a wilderness, accompanied by a little army of very miscellaneous and very queer people, encountering Indians, semi-savage whites, wild beasts, insects, reptiles, every sort of fatigue and discomfort, the horrors and the grandeurs of nature in its wildest state.

As he is to record the story of a definite partitionment from Virginia of land that once belonged to it, he begins with a sparkling sketch of the history of Virginia up to that time; particularly showing how all English America was once Virginia, and how all other English colonies have been formed by being "carved out of Virginia." He sets off, with much humor, the traits of the first inhabitants of Virginia; saying that the original colony consisted of "about an hundred men, most of them reprobates of good

¹ This was then printed with other papers of Colonel Byrd under the general title of "*The Westover Manuscripts.*" A more complete and a more accurate publication of his writings, edited by T. H. Wynne, was made in 1866, under the better title of "*Byrd Manuscripts.*"

families ;”¹ and that at Jamestown, “like true Englishmen, they built a church that cost no more than fifty pounds, and a tavern that cost five hundred.”² He points out the great mistake made by the first colonists in not intermarrying with the Indians: “Morals and all considered, I can’t think the Indians were much greater heathens than the first adventurers, who, had they been good Christians, would have had the charity to take this only method of converting the natives to Christianity. For, after all that can be said, a sprightly lover is the most prevailing missionary that can be sent amongst these, or any other infidels. Besides, the poor Indians would have had less reason to complain that the English took away their land, if they had received it by way of portion with their daughters. . . . Nor would the shade of the skin have been any reproach at this day ; for if a Moor may be washed white in three generations, surely an Indian might have been blanched in two.”³ “I may safely venture to say, the Indian women would have made altogether as honest wives for the first planters, as the damsels they used to purchase from aboard the ships. It is strange, therefore, that any good Christian should have refused a wholesome, straight bedfellow, when he might have had so fair a portion with her, as the merit of saving her soul.”⁴

Very much of his journal, especially the earlier portion of it, is taken up with sarcastic comments upon North Carolina,—its backwardness in civilization, the idleness, ignorance, and poverty of its inhabitants; he heaps innumerable jokes upon them. Some of the people, he says, were sunken into absolute savagery. He tells of a poor wretch on the South Shore,—“a Marooner, that modestly called himself a hermit, though he forfeited that name by suffering a wanton female to cohabit with him. His habitation was a bower covered with bark after the Indian fashion. . . . Like the ravens, he neither ploughed nor

¹ “Byrd Manuscripts,” I. 4.

² Ibid. 5.

³ Ibid. 5.

⁴ Ibid. 77.

sowed, but subsisted chiefly upon oysters, which his handmaid made a shift to gather from the adjacent rocks. Sometimes, too, for change of diet, he sent her to drive up the neighbors' cows, to moisten their mouths with a little milk. But as for raiment, he depended mostly upon his length of beard, and she upon her length of hair, part of which she brought decently forward, and the rest dangled behind quite down to her rump, like one of Herodotus's East Indian Pigmies. Thus did these wretches live in a dirty state of nature, and were mere Adamites, innocence only excepted."¹

He has many sarcasms on the irreligion of North Carolina: "'Tis natural for helpless man to adore his Maker in some form or other; and were there any exception to this rule, I should suspect it to be among the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope and of North Carolina."² The religious service held there by the chaplain of the Virginia party, "was quite a new thing to our brethren of North Carolina, who live in a climate where no clergyman can breathe, any more than spiders in Ireland."³ "They account it among their greatest advantages that they are not priestridden, not remembering that the clergy is rarely guilty of bestriding such as have the misfortune to be poor."⁴ "One thing may be said for the inhabitants of that province, that they are not troubled with any religious fumes, and have the least superstition of any people living. They do not know Sunday from any other day, any more than Robinson Crusoe did; which would give them a great advantage, were they given to be industrious. But they keep so many Sabbaths every week, that their disregard of the seventh day has no manner of cruelty in it, either to servants or cattle."⁵ He suggests that, once in two or three years, the clergy of Virginia should "vouchsafe to take a turn among these gentiles. . . ." "Twould

¹ "Byrd Manuscripts," I. 26-27.

⁴ Ibid. 44.

² Ibid. 43.

⁵ Ibid. 44-45.

³ Ibid. 44.

look a little apostolical; and they might hope to be requited for it hereafter,—if that be not thought too long to tarry for their reward.”¹

He has occasion to speak of Edenton, the capital of North Carolina, which he describes as consisting of “forty or fifty houses, most of them small and built without expense. A citizen here is counted extravagant if he has ambition enough to aspire to a brick-chimney. Justice herself is but indifferently lodged, the court-house having much the air of a common tobacco-house. I believe this is the only metropolis in the Christian or Mohammedan world, where there is neither church, chapel, mosque, synagogue, or any other place of public worship, of any sect or religion whatsoever.”² In North Carolina, “they pay no tribute, either to God or to Cæsar.”³

As to food, “provisions here are extremely cheap, and extremely good; so that people may live plentifully at a trifling expense. Nothing is dear but law, physic, and strong drink, which are all bad in their kind, and the last they get with so much difficulty, that they are never guilty of the sin of suffering it to sour upon their hands.”⁴ He does, however, criticise their excessive use of pork: “The truth of it is, the inhabitants of North Carolina devour so much swine’s flesh, that it fills them full of gross humors. . . . They are commonly obliged to eat it fresh, and that begets the highest taint of scurvy.” This disease often develops into a worse one,—“the yaws, called there very justly the country-distemper. . . . First it seizes the throat, next the palate, and lastly shows its spite to the poor nose, of which ’tis apt, in a small time, treacherously to undermine the foundation. This calamity is so common and familiar here, that it ceases to be a scandal; and in the disputes that happen about beauty, the Noses have in some companies much ado to carry it. Nay, ’tis said that once, after three good pork years, a motion had like to have been

¹ “Byrd Manuscripts,” I. 64. ² *Ibid.* 59. ³ *Ibid.* 65. ⁴ *Ibid.* 60.

made in the house of burgesses, that a man with a nose should be incapable of holding any place of profit in the province; which extraordinary motion could never have been intended without some hopes of a majority."¹

He amuses himself, likewise, over the indolence of the people. He speaks of "the Carolina felicity of having nothing to do."² Drones are common in North Carolina, but they are all men; the women "spin, weave, and knit, all with their own hands, while their husbands, depending on the bounty of the climate, are slothful in everything but getting of children, and in that only instance make themselves useful members of an infant-colony."³ The men "make their wives rise out of their beds early in the morning, at the same time that they lie and snore, till the sun has run one-third of his course, and dispersed all the unwholesome damps. Then, after stretching and yawning for half an hour, they light their pipes, and under the protection of a cloud of smoke venture out into the open air; though, if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return shivering into the chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms upon the cornfield fence, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a small heat at the hoe, but generally find reasons to put it off till another time. Thus, they loiter away their lives, like Solomon's sluggard, with their arms across, and at the winding up of the year scarcely have bread to eat."⁴

As the expedition moves westward, the author's attention is taken up by other things than the drolleries of North Carolina society; and he jots down admirable notices of rare plants and animals, racy sketches of Indian character, amusing stories of forest-adventure, a learned digression upon music, and vivacious pictures of the country through which they pass. He becomes a great enthusiast over the virtues of the plant, ginseng: "Though prac-

¹ "Byrd Manuscripts," I. 32-33. ² *Ibid.* 60. ³ *Ibid.* 41. ⁴ *Ibid.* 56-57.

tice will soon make a man of tolerable vigor an able footman, yet, as a help to bear fatigue, I used to chew a root of ginseng as I walked along. This kept up my spirits, and made me trip away as nimbly in my half jack-boots as younger men could in their shoes. This plant is in high esteem in China, where it sells for its weight in silver. . . . Indeed, it is a vegetable of so many virtues, that Providence has planted it very thin in every country that has the happiness to produce it. Nor, indeed, is mankind worthy of so great a blessing, since health and long life are commonly abused to ill purposes. . . . Its virtues are, that it gives an uncommon warmth and vigor to the blood, and frisks the spirits beyond any other cordial. It cheers the heart even of a man that has a bad wife, and makes him look down with great composure on the crosses of the world. It promotes insensible perspiration, dissolves all phlegmatic and viscous humors that are apt to obstruct the narrow channels of the nerves. It helps the memory, and would quicken even Helvetian dulness. 'Tis friendly to the lungs, much more than scolding itself. It comforts the stomach, and strengthens the bowels, preventing all colics and fluxes. In one word, it will make a man live a great while, and very well while he does live. And what is more, it will make even old age amiable, by rendering it lively, cheerful, and good humored."¹

Three years after these journeys across the debatable ground between Virginia and North Carolina, the author made another journey, of much less difficulty and of much less public importance, the leading incidents of which he has chronicled in some very piquant and charming memoranda, entitled "A Progress to the Mines."² In the autumn of the following year, 1733, with a party of four gentlemen, five woodmen, four negroes, and three Indians, he made a journey to a vast tract of land owned by him, near the River Dan in North Carolina. His diary of this

¹ "Byrd Manuscripts," I. 161-162.

² *Ibid.* II. 41-82.

expedition is called "A Journey to the Land of Eden,"¹ the latter phrase being the somewhat ironical name of the region referred to. Both of these narratives are full of merriment; nearly every sentence has some jovial touch; and pervading all, is the perfect and ingrained gentlemanliness of the writer. One day, he arrived at a place where were two mills belonging to himself: "I had the grief to find them both stand as still for the want of water, as a dead woman's tongue, for want of breath."² At one house he was detained for a day or two on account of bad weather; and in his account of the way in which he and his friends amused themselves during their imprisonment, by reading the second part of "The Beggars' Opera," which he found in that remote Virginia mansion, we catch a glimpse of the early presence of the Queen Anne writers even in our American forests, as well as of William Byrd's familiar acquaintance with the current literary gossip of London.³ Continuing that journey under a promise of better weather, he mentions his arrival at "the homely dwelling of the Reverend Mr. Marij," by "a path as narrow as that which leads to heaven, but much more dirty."⁴ Further on, he tells how, one night, himself and another gentleman, after positively declaring against it, were induced by the ladies of the house to eat a hearty supper,—upon which he has this comment: "So very pliable a thing is frail man, when women have the bending of him."⁵ He was a devout Churchman, and a faithful friend of the clergy of Virginia; and for the latter he shows his good-will by never missing an opportunity of playfully remarking upon their personal and professional characteristics. Thus, of a visit one Sunday to Brunswick church: "Mr. Betty, the parson of the parish, entertained us with a good, honest sermon; but whether he bought it, or borrowed it, would have been uncivil in us to inquire. Be that as it will, he

¹ "Byrd Manuscripts," II. 1-39.

⁴ Ibid. 48.

² Ibid. 41.

⁵ Ibid. 67.

³ Ibid. 47-48.

is a decent man, with a double chin that fits gracefully over his band, and his parish, especially the female part of it, like him well. . . . When church was done, we refreshed our teacher with a glass of wine, and then receiving his blessing, took horse and directed our course to Major Embry's."¹

V.

WILLIAM STITH, who was born in Virginia in 1689 and died in 1755, began late in his life to write the history of that colony; being particularly moved to the task by noticing "how empty and unsatisfactory" was everything at that time published upon the subject, excepting, as he said, "the excellent but confused materials" of Captain John Smith.² He had been a busy person in his day,—clergyman, master of the grammar school of William and Mary College, chaplain of the house of burgesses, president of the college, and man of public utility in general. Being related to several of the most eminent families in Virginia, and in constant association with its leading men, he was from his youth familiar with all its historical traditions; he had access to many rare manuscripts relating to its past; and, finally, he had won for himself "perfect leisure and retirement." All things seemed to favor his ambition to give to Virginia what it greatly needed—a history of itself. "Such a work," said he, "will be a noble and elegant entertainment for my vacant hours, which it is not in my power to employ more to my own satisfaction, or the use and benefit of my country."³ Accordingly, in 1747, he published at Williamsburg, in a volume of three hundred and thirty-one pages, the first part of "The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia," carrying the narrative down only to the year 1624. Though he lived eight years longer, this first part of his

¹ "Byrd Manuscripts," II. 34.

² "Hist. Va." Pref. iii.

³ Ibid. iv.

history proved to be also its last part.¹ The book is not ill-written. It is, indeed, projected upon a scale too large for its subject; it fills up the canvas with small incidents; it seeks to give historical memory to the petty doings of politicians, pioneers, and savages, that carry in themselves the necessity of being forgotten. Nevertheless, while the interest of the story is often swamped in a deluge of details, and the whole book is a sin against artistic proportion and the limits of human life, the reader will be likely to pronounce unjust the verdict of Thomas Jefferson,² who says that Stith, though "very exact," had "no taste in style," and that his writing is "inelegant." The author founds his work chiefly upon the narratives of Captain John Smith, in whom he confides with a blissful faith that is now amusing: "I take him to have been a very honest man and a strenuous lover of truth."³ The historian protests his own impartiality: "I declare myself to be of no party, but have labored solely with a view to find out and relate the truth."⁴ Yet his account of the early governor, Samuel Argall, is so hostile that he has been accused of yielding unduly to partisan documents against that personage, and even of adding "bitter and groundless accusations of his own."⁵ Against King James the First, who vexed the affairs of the colony by his ceaseless and senseless interference, the historian speaks with a frankness of contempt that leaves an unwonted animation upon his pages: "If more than a century is not enough to un-Solomonize that silly monarch, I must give up all my notions of things. . . . I take it to be the main part of the duty and office of an historian, to paint men and things in their true and lively colors; and to do that justice to the vices and follies of princes and great men after their death, which it is not safe or proper to do whilst they are alive. And herein, as

¹ The only other publication of his that I can hear of, is a sermon on "The Nature and Extent of Christ's Redemption," Williamsburg, 1753.

² "Complete Works," VIII. 415. ³ "Hist. Va." Pref. iv.

⁴ Ibid. vii.

⁵ 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. IX. 5, note.

I judge, chiefly consist the strength and excellency of Tacitus and Suetonius. Their style and manner are far inferior to Livy's, and the writers of the Julian and Augustan ages; but they have more than painted and exposed alive to view the greatest train of monsters that ever disgraced a throne, or did dishonor to human nature. . . . King James the First fell, indeed, far short of the Cæsars' superlative wickedness and supremacy in vice. He was at best only very simple and injudicious, without any steady principle of justice and honor; which was rendered the more odious and ridiculous by his large and constant pretensions to wisdom and virtue. And he had, in truth, all the forms of wisdom,—forever erring very learnedly, with a wise saw or Latin sentence in his mouth; for he had been bred up under Buchanan, one of the brightest geniuses and most accomplished scholars of that age, who had given him Greek and Latin in great waste and profusion—but it was not in his power to give him good sense. That is the gift of God and nature alone, and is not to be taught; and Greek and Latin without it only cumber and overload a weak head, and often render the fool more abundantly foolish. I must, therefore, confess that I have ever had, from my first acquaintance with history, a most contemptible opinion of this monarch; which has perhaps been much heightened and increased by my long studying and conning over the materials of this history. For he appears in his dealings with the company to have acted with such mean arts and fraud, and such little tricking, as highly misbecome majesty. And I am much mistaken if his arbitrary proceedings and unjust designs will appear from any part of his history more fully than from these transactions with the company and colony. . . . I think and speak of him with the same freedom and indifferency that I would think and speak of any other man long since dead; and therefore I have no way restrained my style in freely exposing his weak and injurious proceedings.”¹

¹ “Hist. Va.” Pref. vi-vii.

A good example of Stith's descriptive manner is his account of the dreadful massacre of the white people in Virginia by the Indians, in 1622—a passage of genuine dignity, pathos, and graphic power.¹

3. NORTH CAROLINA.

I.

"In the year 1700," writes a genial and enterprising young Englishman named John Lawson,² "when people flocked from all parts of the Christian world to see the solemnity of the grand jubilee at Rome, my intention at that time being to travel, I accidentally met with a gentleman who had been abroad and was very well acquainted with the ways of living in both Indies; of whom having made inquiry concerning them, he assured me that Carolina was the best country I could go to, and that there then lay a ship in the Thames in which I might have my passage. I laid hold on this opportunity, and was not long on board before we fell down the river and sailed to Cowes, where having taken in some passengers we proceeded on our voyage." Thus a very useful and notable man found his way to the new world, arriving at Charleston, South Carolina, early in September, 1700. Of this place and its people, just as they appeared to him in that closing year of the seventeenth century, he has left us a goodly picture: "The town has very regular and fair streets, in which are good buildings of brick and wood; and since my coming thence, has had great additions of beautiful, large brick buildings, besides a strong fort and regular fortifications made to defend the town. The inhabitants, by their wise management and industry, have much improved the country, which is in as thriving circumstances at this time as any colony on the continent of Eng-

¹ "Hist. Va." 208-212.

² "Hist. N. C." *Introd.* xi.

lish America. . . . They have a considerable trade both to Europe and to the West Indies, whereby they become rich. . . . Their cohabiting in a town has drawn to them ingenious people of most sciences, whereby they have tutors amongst them, that educate their youth alamode. . . . All enjoy at this day an entire liberty of their worship; . . . it being the lord-proprietors' intent that the inhabitants of Carolina should be as free from oppression as any in the universe. . . . They have a well-disciplined militia. . . . Their officers, both infantry and cavalry, generally appear in scarlet mountings, and as rich as in most regiments belonging to the crown, which shows the richness and grandeur of this colony. They are a frontier, and prove such troublesome neighbors to the Spaniards, that they have once laid their town of St. Augustine in ashes, and drove away their cattle. . . . The merchants of Carolina are fair, frank traders. The gentlemen seated in the country are very courteous, live very noble in their houses, and give very genteel entertainment to all strangers and others that come to visit them."¹

After staying in this delightful community nearly four months, the young immigrant determined, for some reason, to seek his fortunes in North Carolina; and on the third day after Christmas, 1700, he began his voyage thither along the coast, going in a large canoe, and having in his company five white men and four Indians. Upon this journey, he went by sea only as far as the Santee river; he then struck inland and wandered in zigzag fashion toward the north, paddling up rivers or wading across them, pushing through highlands and morasses, among savages, serpents, wild beasts, and white pioneers, and encountering in good humor all manner of hardships and perils. This long strain of travel in those woods, in those times, proved altogether a revelation to John Lawson, fresh and tender from the beatitudes of a civilized English home; and he

¹ "Hist. N. C." Introd. xiii-xvii.

had the good sense to keep a faithful record of it. He put down on paper what he saw and experienced day by day as he went along: mishaps, prosperities; descriptions of the country, rivers, plants, trees, animals; their own talk by the way; their occasional entertainment in the hovels of white settlers and of Indians; especially such traits of the latter as seemed to him novel, picturesque, or amusing. He is particularly minute and facetious in his account of the Indian women that they met; telling some broad stories of the intrigues of his own party with these tawny beauties,—wherein the supposed distinction in morals between Christian and pagan seems to become effaced, or, if possible, to be in favor of the pagan. At last, however, after “a thousand miles’ travel among the Indians,” he and his associates arrived safe in North Carolina; “where,” he says, “being well received by the inhabitants and pleased with the goodness of the country, we all resolved to continue.”¹

A man of John Lawson’s intelligence was of course a boon to that colony. He was especially useful by his ability to survey land. Accordingly, they soon made him their surveyor-general; and for the next twelve years he was kept busy in that function, going in every direction through the wilderness, and having his eyes open all the time for information about man and nature—much of which he carefully noted down in his journal. He had some skill in natural history, and compiled minute descriptions of birds, fishes, beasts, minerals, and the flora of the country. The country itself, however, its beauty and fertility, and the charms of its climate, bred in him an enthusiasm. Its coast, he tells us, in fine imagery, is “a chain of sand-banks, which defends it from the violence and insults of the Atlantic ocean; by which barrier a vast sound is hemmed in, which fronts the mouths of the navigable and pleasant rivers of this fertile country, and into

¹ “Hist. N. C.” 105.

which they disgorge themselves."¹ He gives a picture of the spot where the first hapless colonists sent by Sir Walter Raleigh had their fatal residence; and he adds to it this sweet and poetic story "that passes for an uncontested truth amongst the inhabitants of this place, . . . that the ship which brought the first colonists does often appear amongst them, under sail, in a gallant posture, which they call Sir Walter Raleigh's ship."²

As to North Carolina, it is "a delicious country, being placed in that girdle of the world which affords wine, oil, fruit, grain, and silk, with other rich commodities, besides a sweet air, moderate climate, and fertile soil. These are the blessings, under Heaven's protection, that spin out the thread of life to its utmost extent, and crown our days with the sweets of health and plenty, which, when joined with content, renders the possessors the happiest race of men upon earth. The inhabitants of Carolina, through the richness of the soil, live an easy and pleasant life; the land being of several sorts of compost; . . . one part bearing great timbers; others being savannahs or natural meads, where no trees grow for several miles, adorned by nature with a pleasant verdure and beautiful flowers, . . . yielding abundance of herbage for cattle, sheep, and horses. The country in general affords pleasant seats, the land, except in some few places, being dry and high banks, parcelled out into most convenient necks by the creeks; . . . whereby, with a small trouble of fencing, almost every man may enjoy to himself an entire plantation, or rather park. . . . I may say the universe does not afford such another."³

In his office of colonial surveyor he often had to live a rough and solitary life in the far-off woods; and his experience was fruitful in adventures, instructive and amusing for him and for us. Thus, in giving a description of the alligator, he narrates this incident, which occurred at

¹ "Hist. N. C." 107.

² Ibid. 109.

³ Ibid. 135-136.

an early period of his residence in North Carolina, and before he had become intimately acquainted with the playful ways of that interesting monster: "This animal in these parts sometimes exceeds seventeen feet long. It is impossible to kill them with a gun, unless you chance to hit them about the eyes, which is a much softer place than the rest of their impenetrable armor. They roar and make a hideous noise against bad weather, and before they come out of their dens in the spring. I was pretty much frightened with one of these once. . . . I had built a house about a mile from an Indian town on the fork of Neuse River, where I dwelt by myself, excepting a young Indian fellow, and a bull dog that I had along with me. I had not then been so long a sojourner in America as to be thoroughly acquainted with this creature. One of them had got his nest directly under my house, which stood on pretty high land and by a creek side, in whose banks his entering-place was, his den reaching the ground directly on which my house stood. I was sitting alone by the fireside, about nine o'clock at night, sometime in March, the Indian fellow being gone to the town to see his relations, so that there was nobody in the house but myself and my dog; when, all of a sudden, this ill-favored neighbor of mine set up such a roaring, that he made the house shake about my ears. . . . The dog stared as if he was frightened out of his senses; nor indeed could I imagine what it was. . . . Immediately again I had another lesson, and so a third. Being at that time amongst none but savages, I began to suspect they were working some piece of conjuration under my house, to get away my goods. . . . At last my man came in, to whom when I had told the story, he laughed at me and presently undeceived me."¹

Of course he had great opportunities of studying the Indians, whom he always speaks of with a sort of gentle liking, especially their women. Among the latter, he says,

¹ "Hist. N. C." 209-210.

"it seems impossible to find a scold ; if they are provoked or affronted by their husbands or some other, they resent the indignity offered them in silent tears, or by refusing their meat. Would some of our European daughters of thunder set these Indians for a pattern, there might be more quiet families found amongst them."¹ "When young and at maturity, they are as fine-shaped creatures . . . as any in the universe. They are of a tawny complexion ; their eyes very brisk and amorous ; their smiles afford the finest composure a face can possess ; their hands are of the finest make with small, long fingers, and as soft as their cheeks ; and their whole bbdies of a smooth nature. They are not so uncouth . . . as we suppose them, nor are they strangers or not proficient in the soft passion. . . . As for the report that they are never found unconstant, like the Europeans, it is wholly false ; for were the old world and the new one put into a pair of scales, in point of constancy, it would be a hard matter to discern which was the heavier."² "The woman is not punished for adultery ; but 'tis the man that makes the injured person satisfaction. . . . The Indians say that the woman is a weak creature and easily drawn away by the man's persuasion ; for which reason, they lay no blame upon her, but the man (that ought to be master of his passion) for persuading her to it."³

At one time he saw this prodigy amongst the Indians,—
 "the strangest spectacle of antiquity I ever knew, it being an old Indian squaw, that, had I been to have guessed at her age by her aspect, old Parr's head (the Welsh Methusalem) was a face in swaddling clouts to hers. Her skin hung in reaves, like a bag of tripe. By a fair computation, one might have justly thought it would have contained three such carcasses as hers then was. . . . By what I could gather she was considerably above one hundred years old, notwithstanding she smoked tobacco and eat her victuals, . . . as heartily as one of eighteen."⁴

¹ "Hist. N. C." 67.

² Ibid. 299.

³ Ibid. 306.

⁴ Ibid. 55.

He tells in another place of an interview with the king of the Santee Indians, who came to him attended by his conjuror, or doctor,—the latter being a shrewd quack remarkably successful, like his brethren in Christendom, in living upon the credulity of his victims. This doctor himself had in former time been afflicted with a certain dangerous and disreputable disease; and in order to treat himself for it in secret, he had withdrawn into the woods, having with him but a single companion, who was suffering from the same distemper. The conjuror succeeded in effecting a cure for both of them, but only at the expense of the noses of both; and, at last, “coming again amongst their old acquaintance so disfigured, the Indians admired to see them metamorphosed after that manner, inquired of them where they had been all that time, and what were become of their noses. They made answer that they had been conversing with the white man above—meaning God Almighty; . . . he being much pleased with their ways, . . . had promised to make their capacities equal with the white people in making guns, ammunition, and so forth; in retaliation of which, they had given him their noses. The verity of which they yet hold.”¹

The author greatly admired the dignity and self-contained power of the Indians: “Their eyes are commonly full and manly, and their gait sedate and majestic. They never walk backward and forward as we do, nor contemplate on the affairs of loss and gain, the things which daily perplex us. They are dexterous and steady, both as to their hands and feet, to admiration. They will walk over deep brooks and creeks on the smallest poles, and that without any fear or concern. Nay, an Indian will walk on the ridge of a barn or house, and look down the gable end, and spit upon the ground, as unconcerned as if he was walking on terra firma.”²

The fate of this admirable observer was sufficiently

¹ “Hist. N. C.” 37-40.

² *Ibid.* 281.

mournful. Continuing his career as public surveyor of North Carolina as late as 1712, he went out in that year upon an expedition into the wilderness, in the company of a Swiss nobleman, Baron de Graffenried, who had plans for bringing a colony thither. They fell into the hands of hostile Indians, who burned Lawson at the stake,¹ and permitted the escape of the baron only upon his payment of a ransom. But John Lawson, though slain thus miserably, had made good use of his time in the Carolinas; and three years before his death, he had published in London a quarto volume embodying the story of his adventures and observations in the new world, under the rather inapt title of "*The History of North Carolina*,"²—an uncommonly strong and sprightly book.

4. SOUTH CAROLINA.

I.

There were in South Carolina in the eighteenth century three distinguished men of the name of Alexander Garden; one a physician and naturalist; another, his son, an officer in the Revolutionary War, and the author of a book of anecdotes respecting that contest; the third, perhaps not related to the other two, an Episcopal clergyman, who died in Charleston in 1756, after a service of thirty-four years as the rector of St. Philip's in that city. This man, a native of Scotland, came to South Carolina about the year 1720, being then not far from thirty-five years old; and besides

¹ Col. Byrd, "*Dividing Line*," 174, gives a somewhat different version of the circumstances of Lawson's death. He says that the Indians were angry at Lawson for surveying their lands, and that "they waylaid him and cut his throat from ear to ear."

² Reprinted, Raleigh, N. C., 1860. A physician named John Brickell, apparently an Irishman, and settled in the practice of his profession in N. C., published at Dublin, in 1737, "*The Natural History of North Carolina*;" but this book is an extensive and very impudent plagiarism from John Lawson.

his rectorship in Charleston, he held for the larger part of his life the office of commissary to the Bishop of London, for the Carolinas, Georgia, and the Bahama islands. He was a person of extraordinary influence in his day. All his opinions were sharply defined; and in the expression of them he was absolutely without fear. He stood for the authority of his church in all things; he was an austere disciplinarian, orderly, energetic, neither taking nor granting any relaxation from the letter of ecclesiastical law. For example, he would never perform the ceremony of marriage in Lent, or on any fast day, or in any manner deviating in the smallest particular from that prescribed in the Prayer-book; for marriage-fees, he would receive not one penny less or more than the law allowed; and exactly one-tenth of his income was measured out with arithmetical precision as charity to the poor.¹

In the year 1740, alarmed and disgusted by the proceedings of the great preacher, George Whitefield, who was a clergyman of the Church of England, Garden not only prosecuted him vigorously in the ecclesiastical court, but pursued him with energy and wit in the wider court of public opinion. He preached, and then published, two sermons entitled "Regeneration and the Testimony of the Spirit," based upon the text, "They who have turned the world upside down have come hither also;" and referring caustically to Whitefield as a preacher whose sermons are "a medley of truth and falsehood, sense and nonsense, served up with pride and virulence, and other like saucy ingredients."² He likewise published a series of six letters to Whitefield, which are sprightly and pungent, and which the New England divine, Thomas Prince, described as "full of mistake, misconstruction, misrepresentation, cavil, ill nature, ill manners, scorn, and virulence."³ Three years afterward, in the year 1743, Garden himself reviewed

¹ David Ramsay, "Hist. S. C." II. 466-469.

² Pref. to sermons.

³ Catalogue of Prince Library, 26.

the tremendous controversy, and justified his own course in it, doing this in a letter¹ to a friend, some sentences of which may sufficiently represent to us the rather tart and spicular quality of his style. All his efforts, he says, have been directed solely in defence of "the cause of truth against the frantics gone forth amongst us. . . . I could now indeed wish that my pen against Whitefield had run in somewhat smoother a style. But had you been here on the spot to have seen the frenzy he excited among the people, the bitterness and virulence wherewith he raved against the clergy of the Church of England in general, and how artfully he labored to set the mob upon me in particular, I dare say you would have thought the provocation enough to ruffle any temper, and a sufficient apology for the keenest expressions I have used against him. . . . As to the state of religion in this province, it is bad enough, God knows. Rome and the Devil have contrived to crucify her 'twixt two thieves,—Infidelity and Enthusiasm. The former, alas, too much still prevails; but as to the latter, thanks to God, it is greatly subsided, and even at the point of vanishing away. We had here trances, visions, and revelations both 'mong blacks and whites, in abundance. But ever since the famous Hugh Brian, sousing himself into the River Jordan, in order to smite and divide its waters, had his eyes opened, and saw himself under the delusion of the Devil, those things have dwindled into disgrace, and are now no more. Bad also is the present state of the poor orphan-house in Georgia,—that land of lies, and from which we have no truth but what they can neither disguise nor conceal. The whole colony is accounted here one great lie, from the beginning to this day; and the orphan-house, you know, is a part of the whole—a scandalous bubble."

¹ First printed in N. E. Hist. and Genear. Reg. XXIV. 117-118.

5. GEORGIA.

I.

The story usually given concerning the original settlement, in 1733, of the youngest of the American colonies, reads like a chapter from some political romance, in which the hero, General James Oglethorpe, appears to be a compound of Solon, Achilles, Don Quixote, and the Man of Ross. The commonwealth of Georgia makes a prompt and rather brilliant entrance into American literature, by virtue of a little book written just seven years after the colony was founded,—the joint production of Patrick Tailfer, Hugh Anderson, David Douglass, and other primitive inhabitants of the colony. These men, apparently of considerable literary culture, had quarrelled with Oglethorpe, and had been worsted; and having escaped to Charleston in 1740, they continued the fight by publishing in that year, both there and in London, an artful and powerful book against Oglethorpe, called "A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia."

Within a volume of only one hundred and twelve pages, is compressed a masterly statement of the authors' alleged grievances at the hands of Oglethorpe. The book gives a detailed and even documentary account of the rise of the colony, and of its quick immersion in suffering and disaster, through Oglethorpe's selfishness, greed, despotism, and fanatic pursuit of social chimeras. It charges his deputy, Thomas Causton, with a long course of brutal tyranny and cruelty, in which he was sustained by his master. Its summary of "the causes of the ruin and desolation of the colony," contains these seven particulars,—delusive reports in England of the natural advantages of Georgia, restrictions upon the tenure and use of its lands, enormous quit-rents, paralysis of agriculture through Oglethorpe's refusal to admit negro-labor, the cruel abuse of authority by Oglethorpe and his subordinates, their neglect

of manufactures, finally, Oglethorpe's perversion of moneys entrusted to him in Christian charity for the erection of churches and schools.

Whatever may be the truth or the justice of this book, it is abundantly interesting; and if any one has chanced to find the prevailing rumor of Oglethorpe somewhat nauseating in its sweetness, he may here easily allay that unpleasant effect. Certainly, as a polemic, it is one of the most expert pieces of writing to be met with in our early literature. Its mastery of the situation is everywhere maintained, through the perfect mastery on the part of the authors, of their own temper. It never blusters or scolds. It is always cool, poised, polite, and merciless; and it passes back and forth, with fatal ease, between dreadful fact and equally dreadful invective and raillery. For example, it accuses Oglethorpe of caring more for the prosperity of his political hobbies, than for the happiness of his colonists: "Alas, our miseries could not alter his views of things."¹ It contrasts the brave and beautiful fictions about Georgia that were sown broadcast over England, with the sorrowful and terrible realities: "Thus, while the nation at home was amused with the fame of the happiness and flourishing of the colony, . . . the poor miserable settlers and inhabitants were exposed to as arbitrary a government as Turkey or Muscovy ever felt. Very looks were criminal; and the grand sin of withstanding . . . authority . . . was punished without mercy."² After spreading before the world the whole horrible story, the book concludes with this powerful and pathetic sentence: "By these and many other such hardships, the poor inhabitants of Georgia are scattered over the face of the earth,—her plantations a wild, her towns a desert, her villages in rubbish, her improvements a byword, and her liberties a jest, an object of pity to friends, and of insult, contempt, and ridicule to enemies."

¹ "Narrative," etc. Pref. viii.

² Ibid. 36.

The above description of the contents of the book may prepare the reader to appreciate the most artistic and amusing part of it,—the dedication. With exquisite mockery, the book is inscribed to Oglethorpe himself. It places his name in full at the head of the address, prefixing and affixing all his sonorous titles, military, political, literary, and feudalistic; it addresses him always, with feigned reverence, as “your Excellency;” and it forms altogether a most laughable burlesque upon laudatory dedications in general, and an elegant and most caustic satire upon what the authors call the vanity and hypocrisy of Oglethorpe in particular. Referring to the confusion, the poverty and wretchedness into which the colony had fallen, and veiling this deadly meaning under the forms of utmost urbanity and compliment, it thus salutes him: “May it please your Excellency, As the few surviving remains of the colony of Georgia find it necessary to present the world, and in particular Great Britain, with a true state of that province, from its first rise to its present period, your Excellency, of all mankind, is best entitled to the dedication, as the principal author of its present strength and affluence, freedom and prosperity. And though incontestable truths will recommend the following narrative to the patient and attentive reader, yet your name, Sir, will be no little ornament to the frontispiece, and may possibly engage some courteous reader a little beyond it.”

It then delicately taunts Oglethorpe with the elaborate and nauseous flattery in prose and verse to which he was accustomed, and which he seemed to encourage: “That dedication and flattery are synonymous, is the complaint of every dedicator, who concludes himself ingenious and fortunate, if he can discover a less trite and direct method of flattering than is usually practised; but we are happily prevented from the least intention of this kind, by the repeated offerings of the muses and news-writers to your Excellency, in the public papers. ’Twere presumptuous even to dream of equalling or increasing them. We

therefore flatter ourselves that nothing we can advance will in the least shock your Excellency's modesty, not doubting but your goodness will pardon any deficiency of elegance and politeness, on account of our sincerity, and the serious truths we have the honor to approach you with."

With the most deferential tones they then proceed to compliment him on the principal traits of novelty in his arrangements for Georgia, every item mentioned as an encomium being, in fact, a thrust of deadly sarcasm: "We have seen the ancient custom of sending forth colonies, for the improvement of any distant territory or new acquisition, continued down to ourselves; but to your Excellency alone it is owing that the world is made acquainted with a plan highly refined from those of all former projectors. They fondly imagined it necessary to communicate to such young settlements the fullest rights and properties, all the immunities of their mother-countries, and privileges rather more extensive. By such means, indeed, these colonies flourished with early trade and affluence. But your Excellency's concern for our perpetual welfare could never permit you to propose such transitory advantages for us. You considered riches, like a divine and a philosopher, as the '*irritamenta malorum*,' and knew that they were disposed to inflate weak minds with pride, to hamper the body with luxury, and introduce a long variety of evils. Thus have you 'protected us from ourselves,' as Mr. Waller says, by keeping all earthly comforts from us. You have afforded us the opportunity of arriving at the integrity of the primitive times, by entailing a more than primitive poverty on us. The toil that is necessary to our bare subsistence, must effectually defend us from the anxieties of any further ambition. As we have no properties to feed vainglory and beget contention, so we are not puzzled with any system of laws to ascertain and establish them. The valuable virtue of humility is secured to us by your care to prevent our procuring, or so much as seeing,

any negroes, . . . lest our simplicity might mistake the poor Africans for greater slaves than ourselves. And that we might fully receive the spiritual benefit of those wholesome austerities, you have wisely denied us the use of such spirituous liquors as might in the least divert our minds from the contemplation of our happy circumstances.

"Be pleased, . . . Great Sir, to accompany our heated imaginations in taking a view of this colony of Georgia,—this child of your auspicious politics,—arrived at the utmost vigor of its constitution at a term when most former states have been struggling through the convulsions of their infancy. This early maturity, however, lessens our admiration that your Excellency lives to see (what few Founders ever aspired after) the great decline and almost final termination of it. So many have finished their course during the progress of the experiment, and such numbers have retreated from the phantoms of poverty and slavery which their cowardly imaginations pictured to them, that you may justly vaunt with the boldest hero of them all,

'Like Death you reign
O'er silent subjects and a desert plain.'

"Yet must your enemies (if you have any) be ready to confess that no ordinary statesman could have digested, in the like manner, so capacious a scheme, such a copious jumble of power and politics. We shall content ourselves with observing that all those beauteous models of government which the little states of Germany exercise, and those extensive liberties which the boors of Poland enjoy, were designed to concentrate in your system; and were we to regard the modes of government, we must have been strangely unlucky to have missed of the best, where there was an appearance of so great a variety. For, under the influence of our Perpetual Dictator, we have seen something like aristocracy, oligarchy, as well as the triumvirate, decemvirate, and consular authority of famous republics, which have expired many ages before us. What wonder

then, we share the same fate? Do their towns and villages exist but in story and rubbish? We are all over ruins; our public-works, forts, wells, highways, light-houses, stores, and water-mills, and so forth, are dignified like theirs with the same venerable desolation. The log-house, indeed, is like to be the last forsaken spot of your empire; yet even this, through the death or desertion of those who should continue to inhabit it, must suddenly decay; the bankrupt jailor himself shall soon be denied the privilege of human conversation; and when this last moment of the spell expires, the whole shall vanish like the illusion of some eastern magician.

“But let not this solitary prospect impress your Excellency with any fears of having your services to mankind, and to the settlers of Georgia in particular, buried in oblivion; for if we diminutive authors are allowed to prophesy,—as you know poets in those cases formerly did,—we may confidently presage, that while the memoirs of America continue to be read in English, Spanish, or the language of the Scots Highlanders, your Excellency’s exploits and epocha will be transmitted to posterity.

“Should your Excellency apprehend the least tincture of flattery in anything already hinted, we may sincerely assure you, we intended nothing that our sentiments did not very strictly attribute to your merit; and in such sentiments we have the satisfaction of being fortified by all persons of impartiality and discernment.

“But not to trespass on those minutes which your Excellency may suppose more significantly employed on the sequel, let it suffice at present to assure you that we are deeply affected by your favors; and though unable of ourselves properly to acknowledge them, we shall embrace every opportunity of recommending you to higher powers, who, we are hopeful, will reward your Excellency according to your Merit!”

CHAPTER XVIII.

GENERAL LITERARY FORCES IN THE COLONIAL TIME.

- I.—Tendency in each colony toward isolation—Local peculiarities in thought and language—Distribution of personal and literary types.
- II.—General tendencies toward colonial fellowship, founded on kinship, religion, commerce, subjection to the same sovereign, peril from the same enemies—Special intellectual tendencies toward colonial fellowship, founded on the rise of journalism, the establishment of colleges, and the study of physical science.
- III.—The rise of American journalism—"Public Occurrences," in 1690—"The Boston News-Letter," in 1704—Dates of the founding of the first newspapers in the several colonies—Whole number founded in each colony before 1765—Description of the colonial newspapers—Their effect on intercolonial acquaintance—The growth of literary skill in them—Early literary magazines—First one founded by Franklin, in 1741—"The American Magazine," at Boston—"The Independent Reflector," at New York—"The American Magazine," at Philadelphia.
- IV.—Early American colleges—Seven founded before 1765—Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, New Jersey, King's, Philadelphia, Rhode Island—Grade and extent of instruction in them—Predominant study of the ancient classics—Requirements for admission at Harvard and Yale—Latin in ordinary use in the colleges—Range of studies—Expertness in the use of the ancient languages—How the early colleges led to colonial union—Their vast influence on literary culture—Their promotion of the spiritual conditions on which the growth of literature depends—One effect of their work seen in the state papers of the Revolutionary period—Lord Chat-ham's tribute.
- V.—Study of physical science in America—Begun by the earliest Americans—Eminence of John Winthrop of Connecticut—His connections with the Royal Society—Fitz John Winthrop—Stimulus given to study of nature in New England—Increase Mather—John Williams—Cotton Mather—Jared Eliot—Joseph Dudley—Paul Dudley—Study of science in Virginia—John Banister—William Byrd—Mark Catesby—John Clayton—John Mitchell—John Bartram of Pennsylvania—John Winthrop of Harvard College—The intercolonial correspondence of scientific men—Culmination of scientific research between 1740 and 1765—The brilliant services of Franklin—America instructing Europe in electricity—Leading scientific men in the several colonies—Scientific fellowship a preparation for political fellowship—Impulse given by science to literature.
- VI.—Great change in the character of American literature after 1765.

I.

THE study of American literature in the colonial time, is the study of a literature produced, in isolated portions, at the several local seats of English civilization in America. Before the year 1765, we find in this country, not one American people, but many American peoples. At the various centres of our colonial life,—Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts,—there were, indeed, populations of the same English stock; but these populations differed widely in personal and social peculiarities—in spirit, in opinion, in custom. The germs of a future nation were here, only they were far apart, unsympathetic, at times even unfriendly. No cohesive principle prevailed, no centralizing life; each little nation was working out its own destiny in its own fashion. The Swedish scholar, Peter Kalm, travelling through the colonies from 1748 to 1751, was astonished at the isolation of each in laws, in moneys, in military plans, in social usages.¹ In 1765, on the assembling at New York of the first continental congress, the delegates from the several colonies, like ambassadors from remote nations, could at first only stare at one another as utter strangers in face, in character, even in name.

This notable fact of the isolation of each colony or of each small group of colonies, reflects itself both in the form and in the spirit of our early literature,—giving to each colony or to each group its own literary accent.

The English language that prevailed in all the colonies was, of course, the English language that had been brought from England in the seventeenth century; but, according to a well-established linguistic law, it had at once suffered here an arrest of development, remaining for some time in

¹ "Travels," I. 262-263.

the stage in which it was at the period of the emigration; and when it began to alter, it altered more slowly than it had done, in the meantime, in the mother-country, and it altered in a different direction. Indeed, even in the nineteenth century, "the speech of the American English is archaic with respect to that of the British English,"¹—its peculiarities consisting, in the main, of "seventeenth century survivals as modified by environment."²

Moreover, just as environment led to many modifications of the English language as between the several colonies and the mother-country, so did it lead to many modifications of the English language as between the several colonies themselves; and by the year 1752, it was possible for Benjamin Franklin to say that every colony had "some peculiar expressions, familiar to its own people, but strange and unintelligible to others."³

But the separate literary accent of each colony was derived, also, from dissimilarities deeper than those relating to verbal forms and verbal combinations, namely, dissimilarities in personal character. Thus, the literature of the Churchmen and Cavaliers of Virginia differed from the literature of the Calvinists and Roundheads of New England, just as their natures differed: the former being merry, sparkling, with a sensual and a worldly vein, having some echoes from the lyric poets and the dramatists of the seventeenth century, and from the wits of the time of Queen Anne; the latter, sad, devout, theological, analytic, with a constant effort toward the austerities of the spirit, looking joylessly upon this material world as upon a sphere blighted by sin, giving back plaintive reverberations from the diction of the Bible, of the sermon-writers, and of the makers of grim and sorrowful verse. Between these two extremes,—Virginia and New England,—there lay the mid-

¹ A. J. Ellis, "Early Eng. Pron." Part I. 19-20, whose language in stating the general law, I closely follow above in my statement of a special illustration of it.

² *Ibid.* Part IV. xvii.

³ *Works*, VII. 56.

dle regions of spiritual and literary compromise, New York and Pennsylvania; and there the gravity and immobility of the Dutch Presbyterians, the primness, the literalness, the art-scorning mysticism of the Pennsylvania Quakers, were soon tempered and diversified by an infusion of personal influences that were strongly stimulating and expanding,—many of them being, indeed, free-minded, light-hearted, and moved by a conscious attraction toward the catholic and the beautiful. In general, the characteristic note of American literature in the colonial time, is, for New England, scholarly, logical, speculative, unworldly, rugged, sombre; and as one passes southward along the coast, across other spiritual zones, this literary note changes rapidly toward lightness and brightness, until it reaches the sensuous mirth, the frank and jovial worldliness, the satire, the persiflage, the gentlemanly grace, the amenity, the jocular coarseness, of literature in Maryland, Virginia, and the farther south.

II.

On the other hand, the fact must not be overlooked that, while the tendency toward colonial isolation had its way, throughout the entire colonial age, there was also an opposite tendency—a tendency toward colonial fellowship—that asserted itself even from the first, and yet at the first faintly, but afterward with steadily increasing power as time went on; until at last, in 1765, aided by a fortunate blunder in the statesmanship of England, this tendency became suddenly dominant, and led to that united and great national life, without which a united and great national literature here would have been forever impossible. This august fact of fellowship between the several English populations in America,—a fellowship maintained and even strengthened after the original occasion of it had ceased,—has perhaps saved the English language in America from finally breaking up into a multitude of mutually repellent

dialects; it has certainly saved American literature from the pettiness of permanent local distinctions, from fitfulness in its development, and from disheartening limitations in its audience.

Of the causes that were at work during our colonial age to produce and strengthen this benign tendency toward colonial fellowship, and to ripen it for the illustrious opportunity that came in the year 1765, several belong especially to the domain of general history; and it will be enough for our present purposes merely to name them here. First, it is evident that, between the English residents in America, blood told; for, whatever partisan distinctions, religious or political, separated the primitive colonists on their departure from England and during their earlier years here, these distinctions, after a while, grew dim, especially under the consciousness that they who cherished them were, after all, members of the same great English family, and that the contrasts between themselves were far less than the contrasts between themselves and all other persons on this side of the Atlantic,—Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Indians. Secondly, there were certain religious sympathies that led to intercolonial acquaintance,—Churchmen in one colony reaching out the hand of brotherhood to Churchmen in another colony, Quakers in Pennsylvania greeting Quakers in New Jersey or Rhode Island, the Congregational Calvinists of New England reciprocating kind words with the Presbyterian Calvinists of the middle colonies and the south. Thirdly, in the interchange of commodities between the several colonies, commerce played its usual part as a missionary of genial acquaintance and coöperation. Fourthly, there were in all the colonies certain problems common to all, growing out of their relation to the supreme authority of England; and the method of dealing with these problems in any one colony was of interest to all the others. Finally, all were aware of a common peril from the American ambition of France, and from the savage allies of France on this continent.

Besides these general causes leading toward colonial union,—kinship, religion, commerce, dependence upon the same sovereign, peril from the same enemies,—there were three other causes that may be described as purely intellectual—the rise of journalism, the founding of colleges, and the study of physical science. To these we now need to pay some attention, for the double reason that they worked strongly for the development of that intercolonial fellowship, without which no national literature would ever have been born here, and, also, that they were in themselves literary forces of extraordinary importance.

III.

The first newspaper ever published in America appeared in Boston in 1690, and was named "Public Occurrences." For the crime of uttering "reflections of a very high nature," it was immediately extinguished by the authorities of Massachusetts,—not even attaining the dignity of a second number.¹ Under this rough blow, the real birth of American journalism hesitated for fourteen years. On the fourth of April, 1704, was published in Boston the first number of an American newspaper that lived. It was called "The Boston News-Letter." For fifteen years, it continued to be the only newspaper in America. At last, on the twenty-first of December, 1719, a rival newspaper was started, named "The Boston Gazette;" and on the twenty-second day of the same month, in the same year, there appeared in Philadelphia the first newspaper published in this country outside of Boston. This was called "The American Weekly Mercury." From that time onward, the fashion of having newspapers spread rapidly. In 1721, James Franklin began in Boston "The New England Courant," in which his renowned apprentice got his first training as a writer for the press. In 1725, William

¹ F. Hudson, "Journalism in the U. S." 44-49.

Bradford founded in New York the first newspaper there. Maryland followed with its first newspaper, in 1727; next came South Carolina and Rhode Island, both in 1732; then Virginia, in 1736; then North Carolina and Connecticut, both in 1755; then New Hampshire, in 1756; finally, Georgia, in 1763. Before the close of the year 1765, there had been established in the American colonies at least forty-three newspapers,—one in Georgia, four in South Carolina, two in North Carolina, one in Virginia, two in Maryland, five in Pennsylvania, eight in New York, four in Connecticut, three in Rhode Island, two in New Hampshire, and eleven in Massachusetts.¹

Nearly all of these newspapers were issued once each week; many of them were on diminutive sheets; and for a long time, all of them clung to the prudent plan of publishing only news and advertisements, abstaining entirely from the audacity of an editorial opinion, or disguising that dangerous luxury under pretended letters from correspondents. News from Europe,—when it was to be had,—and especially news from England, occupied a prominent place in these little papers; but, necessarily, for each one, the affairs of its own colony, and next, the affairs of the other colonies furnished the principal items of interest. Thus it was that early American journalism, even though feeble, sluggish, and timid, began to lift the people of each colony to a plane somewhat higher than its own boundaries, and to enable them, by looking abroad, this way and that, upon the proceedings of other people in this country; and upon other interests as precious as their own, to correct the pettiness and the selfishness of mere localism in thought. Colonial journalism was a necessary and a great factor in the slow process of colonial union.

Besides this, our colonial journalism soon became, in itself, a really important literary force. It could not re-

¹ For the above titles and dates, I depend chiefly on I. Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." II. 1-174.

main forever a mere disseminator of public gossip, or a placard for the display of advertisements. The instinct of critical and brave debate was strong even among those puny editors, and it kept struggling for expression. Moreover, each editor was surrounded by a coterie of friends, with active brains and a propensity to utterance; and these constituted a sort of unpaid staff of editorial contributors, who, in various forms,—letters, essays, anecdotes, epigrams, poems, lampoons,—helped to give vivacity and even literary value to the paper.

Our early journalism, likewise, included publications of a more explicit literary intention than the newspapers; publications in which the original work was done with far greater care, and in which far more space was surrendered to literary news and literary criticism, and to the exercise of many sorts of literary talent. The generic name for these publications is the magazine; and the first one issued in this country was by Benjamin Franklin, at Philadelphia, in 1741, and was called "The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, for all the British Plantations in America." It contained, besides general news, copious extracts from new books, and original poems and prose essays. Two years afterward, was started in Boston "The American Magazine and Historical Chronicle," closely modelled after "The London Magazine," and edited by an eminent lawyer of literary proclivities, Jeremiah Gridley. It was published once a month; and it undertook to give in each number reprints of the best essays from the journals of London and the colonies, the proceedings of the Royal Society, a list of new books, abundant extracts from new books, "select pieces relating to the arts and sciences," "essays, moral, civil, political, humorous, and polemical," and "poetical essays on various subjects."¹ The next notable publication of this kind was "The Independent Reflector," begun at New York in 1752, and particularly de-

¹ Part of prospectus, in I. Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." II. 68.

voted to ethical, political, and humorous essays, in prose and verse, which were contributed by a club of literary men in New York and its neighborhood, including William Livingston, President Aaron Burr, John Morin Scott, and the historian, William Smith.¹

By far the most admirable example of our literary periodicals in the colonial time, was "The American Magazine," published at Philadelphia from October, 1757, to October, 1758, and conducted, according to its own announcement, "by a society of gentlemen." In the first number, these gentlemen gave a rather lively description of themselves "as persons whose talents and views in life are very different. . . . Some are, accordingly, of one temper and disposition, and some of another. Some are grave and serious, while others are gay and facetious. . . . Some indulge themselves in the belles-lettres and in productions of wit and fancy, while others are wrapt up in speculation and wholly bent on the abstruser parts of philosophy and science."² The magazine contains a summary of the world's news, philosophical and political discussions, æsthetic and playful essays, poems grave and gay,—all indicating literary feeling, if not literary power. William Smith, the clergyman and president of the young college at Philadelphia, was its principal contributor, and indeed the leading spirit in its management.

IV.

No other facts in American history are more creditable to the American people, than those which relate to their early and steady esteem for higher education, and especially to their efforts and their sacrifices in the founding of colleges. Before the year 1765, seven colleges were established here, all of which, excepting the one of latest birth,

¹ I. Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." II. 125.

² "The Am. Mag." Oct. 1757, Pref. 4-5.

have been mentioned already in the progress of this history: Harvard, in 1636; William and Mary, in 1693; Yale, in 1700; New Jersey, in 1746; King's,¹ in 1754; Philadelphia,² in 1755; Rhode Island,³ in 1764.

Though all these little establishments bore the name of colleges, there were considerable differences among them with respect to the grade and extent of the instruction they furnished,—those founded latest being, in that particular, the most rudimental. Nevertheless, at them all one noble purpose prevailed,—the study of the ancient classics. Thus, at Harvard, so early as 1643, the requirements for entrance were stated as follows: "When any scholar is able to understand Tully or such like classical Latin author extempore, and make and speak true Latin in verse and prose; . . . and decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbs in the Greek tongue, let him then, and not before, be capable of admission into the college."⁴ In 1719, when Jonathan Edwards was a Junior at Yale College, he sent to his father this account of the entrance examination at that college of a lad named Stiles, in whom both were interested: "He was examined in Tully's Orations, in which, though he had never construed before he came to New Haven, yet he committed no error,—in that or any other book, whether Latin, Greek, or Hebrew,—except in Virgil, wherein he could not tell the 'præteritum' of 'requiesco.'"⁵ Once within the college, the student was required to drop the English language, and to use Latin as the usual medium of intercourse: "Scholares vernaculâ linguâ, intra collegii limites, nullo prætextu utuntor."⁶ The course of study "embraced the contemporaneous learning of the colleges in England;"⁷ and as far as possible, everything was done here "pro more

¹ Now Columbia College.

³ Now the University of Pennsylvania.

² Now Brown University.

⁴ B. Peirce, "Hist. Harv. Univ." Appendix, 4-5.

⁵ Works of J. Edwards, I. 31. ⁶ J. Quincy, "Hist. Harv. Univ." I. 578.

⁷ B. Peirce, "Hist. Harv. Univ." 7.

Academiæ in Angliâ." At Harvard College, the studies included grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, physics, astronomy, ethics, politics, divinity; "exercises in style, composition, epitome, both in prose and verse;" Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syriac, and Chaldee. No one was deemed "fit to be dignified with his first degree," until he was "found able to read the originals of the Old and New Testament into the Latin tongue, and to resolve them logically."¹

This extraordinary training in the ancient languages led to forms of proficiency that have no parallel now in American colleges. So early as 1649, President Dunster wrote to Ravius, the famous orientalist, that some of the students at Harvard could "with ease dexterously translate Hebrew and Chaldee into Greek."² In 1678, there was in that college even an Indian student who wrote Latin and Greek poetry; and this accomplishment continued to be an ordinary one there as late the Revolutionary War; while the facile use of Latin, whether for conversation or for oratory, was so common among the scholars of Harvard and of Yale as to excite no remark. It is a token of the learning of those days that a graduate of Yale, of the class of 1746, who rose to be the president of his college, delivered on a certain Commencement-day two elaborate orations,—one being in Latin and the other in Hebrew. Finally, nearly all the superior men in public life, after the immigrant generation, were educated at these little colleges; and in all the studies that then engaged the attention of scholars in the old world, these men, particularly if clergymen, had a scholarship that was, in compass and variety, fully abreast of the learning of the time.

The existence here of these early colleges was in many ways a means of colonial fellowship. Each college was itself, in all portions of the country, a point of distinction

¹ *Ibid.* Appendix 7; also J. Quincy, "Hist. Harv. Univ." I. 190-191.

² J. B. Felt, "Eccl. Hist. N. E." II. 10.

for its own colony; at each college were gathered some students from other colonies; between all the colleges there grew a sense of fraternity in learning and letters, and this reënforced the general sense of fraternity in civic destinies; finally, at these colleges was trained no little of that masterly statesmanship of our later colonial time, which, at a glance, interpreted the danger that hung upon the horizon in 1765, proclaimed the imminent need of colonial union, and quickly brought it about.

But the vast influence that our early colleges exerted upon literary culture, can hardly be overstated. Among all the people, they nourished those spiritual conditions out of which, alone, every wholesome and genuine literature must grow; and in their special devotion to classical studies, they imparted to a considerable body of men the finest training for literary work, that the world is yet possessed of. It was of incalculable service to American literature that, even in these wild regions of the earth, the accents of Homer, of Thucydides, of Cicero, were made familiar to us from the beginning; that a consciousness of the æsthetic principle in verbal expression was kept alive here, and developed, by constant and ardent study of the supreme masters of literary form; and that the great, immemorial traditions of literature were borne hither across the Atlantic from their ancient seats, and were here housed in perpetual temples, for the rearing of which the people gladly went to great cost.

The worst disasters to which young commonwealths are liable, and on which all noble literary growth is the most surely wrecked, are certain base spiritual conditions,—particularly, a loss of deference to what is ancient and permanent, hatred of discipline, impatience with slow and careful work, and by consequence, vulgarity of tone, superficiality, and barbarism. Against these disasters, our early colleges were in some measure a barrier, as they were in every respect a protest. They stood, in their quietness, year by year, generation after generation, inculcating respect for

what is most ancient and most permanent, in thought, in speech, in conduct; they abashed modern egotism by the study of sublime antique models of virtue and greatness; they taught that the worship of wisdom is nobler than the worship of gold, that substance is better than show, that every true man will be simple, and modest, and patient, and faithful, and will hate all shirking and all lies; they testified that even in this world, in the long run, the sovereign power is the power of simple rectitude in all matters of state and church and commerce and personal behavior; they did their best to breed up, for the service of this new land, scholars of catholic learning, preachers who would not part with the ownership of their own souls, and statesmen who would neither serve tyrants nor flatter mobs. By their nourishment of these pure and sound spiritual conditions of a national life, and by their steady discouragement of all spiritual conditions opposite to these, the early American colleges stood for the things without which great thoughts and noble words cannot come. And some fruitage from all that brave work of theirs was gathered sooner, perhaps, than men expected. For example, the tribute of most eloquent homage, which, in 1775, in the House of Lords, the Earl of Chatham paid to the intellectual force, the literary symmetry, and the decorum of the state-papers then recently transmitted from America, and then lying upon the table of that House, was virtually an announcement to Europe of the astonishing news,—that, by means of an intellectual cultivation formed in America, in its own little colleges, on the best models of ancient and modern learning, America had already become not only an integral part of the civilized world, but even a member of the republic of letters.

V.

The study of physical science in this country began with the very settlement of the country. It is not strange that

the men who came to the new world should have inspected it inquisitively, either from love of novelty or from love of gain; and the writings of the first Americans are strewn with sharp observations on the geography of America; on its minerals, soils, waters, plants, animals; on its climates, storms, earthquakes; on its savage inhabitants, its diseases, its medicines; and on the phenomena of the heavens as they appeared to this part of the earth. There were here, even in our earliest age, several men of special scientific inclination, such as William Wood, John Josselyn, John Sherman, John Winthrop of Massachusetts, and John Winthrop of Connecticut. Indeed, the latter was recognized as an eminent physicist even among the contemporaneous physicists of England; and in Connecticut, where he founded the city of New London, and where he was for many years governor, he pursued with great zeal his scientific researches, carrying them even into the fatal chase for the philosopher's stone.¹ He was on terms of endearing intimacy with Watkins, Robert Boyle, and other great leaders of science in England; and it is said that under the menace of public calamities there, and drawn, likewise, by their friendship for Winthrop, these men had proposed to leave England, and to establish in the American colony over which Winthrop presided "a society for promoting natural knowledge."² They were, however, induced by Charles the Second to remain in England; and accordingly, with the coöperation of Winthrop, who happened to be in London at the time, they founded there, instead of in New London, the association that soon became renowned throughout the world as the Royal Society. Of that society, Winthrop "was in a particular manner invited to take upon himself the charge of being the chief correspondent in the West, as Sir Philiberto Vernatti

¹ "The Winthrop Papers," in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. IX. 226-301; X. 1-126; also VI-VII. of the 4th series; and J. R. Lowell, "Among my Books," 1st series, 265-273.

² John Eliot, "Biograph. Dict." 505.

was in the East Indies;¹ and as long as he lived, he was a diligent contributor to it both of scientific specimens from America and of papers on science. Happily, also, in the eager prosecution of such studies, he was succeeded by his son, Fitz John Winthrop, who was also a governor of Connecticut and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

The formation of the Royal Society gave an impulse to the study of physical science, that was felt in every part of the earth, and was especially felt in America. One of the first tokens of its influence here was seen in New England, where the clergy and other learned men turned with uncommon zest from metaphysical subjects to the investigation of natural history. Increase Mather formed in Boston a society of scholars for that purpose; and his writings show that he was alert in observing the world's progress in physical science. John Williams, the minister of Deerfield, was a zealous student of nature, and among his writings are papers treating of matter, wind, fire, water, the earth, beasts, birds, fishes, insects, of the method of drawing a meridian line upon a horizontal plane, of Mars, Mercury, Vulcan, and so forth.² In 1721, Cotton Mather published "*The Christian Philosopher; a Collection of the best Discoveries in Nature, with religious Improvements;*" in which he explains the latest theories in astronomy, meteorology, physics, zoölogy, and ethnography, and shows a large and minute acquaintance with these subjects. In 1748, was published "*An Essay on Field Husbandry in New England,*"—one of the earliest attempts ever made in this country to reënforce by science the empiricism of agriculture. The author was Jared Eliot, a graduate of Yale College, a preacher, physician, naturalist, and farmer; a man whose brain, eye, and hand conspired together through a long life, for the glory of God in the relief of man's estate. Governor Joseph Dudley, who died

¹ Dr. Cromwell Mortimer, "*Phil. Trans.*" XL. Dedication.

² S. W. Williams, "*A Biographical Memoir*" of J. Williams, 131.

in Massachusetts in 1720, added to his great learning in law, divinity, and literature, a large acquaintance with science; and his son, Paul Dudley, who died in 1752, and who resembled his father in variety of learning, was specially devoted to natural history; and several papers of his upon that subject appeared in the "*Philosophical Transactions*."

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, John Banister, a correspondent of the English naturalist, John Ray, was settled in Virginia, and was eagerly engaged in the preparation of a work on the natural history of that colony; and, besides a catalogue of the plants of Virginia, papers of his were published on "*The Insects of Virginia*," "*Curiosities in Virginia*," "*The Unseen Lupus*," and "*The Pistolochia, or Serpentaria Virginiana*."¹ William Byrd of Westover made many careful notes on the plants and animals of Virginia. Between the years 1710 and 1726, Mark Catesby, a friend of Sir Hans Sloane, pursued a systematic investigation of natural objects in Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and even in Florida and the Bahama islands, and afterward published a large work upon that subject. John Clayton, a physician and botanist, who lived in Virginia from 1706 to 1773, was a tireless student of the plants of that region, greatly enlarged the botanical catalogue, corresponded with Linnæus and Gronovius, and contributed many papers to the "*Philosophical Transactions*." During the larger part of the same period, John Mitchell, likewise a physician and a Fellow of the Royal Society, pursued in Virginia the study of botany, publishing a treatise on the subject, and sending abroad to learned men and learned societies many botanical specimens and many scientific papers.

Perhaps there was no one of these early American students of nature whom it is now pleasanter to recall than

¹ F. S. Drake, "*Dict. Am. Biog.*" 59; also, E. Tuckerman, in "*New England's Rarities*," *Introd.* 15.

the Quaker naturalist, John Bartram. Born in Pennsylvania, in 1701, and left an orphan at thirteen, he had little help from schools, and only such leisure as he could create after his daily work was done; but having, also, a sincere love of nature, a thirst for all sorts of truth, and an aptitude for all sorts of mechanic performance, he throve in various ways. He built with his own hands a house, on his own grounds near Philadelphia, and founded there the first botanic garden in America. In that garden he labored every day, reared a large family, made himself proficient in medicine and surgery, sent botanic specimens to the gardeners of Europe, wrote papers on botany for European scientific societies, was appointed American botanist to George the Third, and won from Linnæus the praise of being "the greatest natural botanist in the world."¹ He had the naturalist's passion for discovery, his friend Peter Collinson saying that he would go fifty or a hundred miles to see a new plant. Twice he made long tours of scientific exploration, first in 1743 through Pennsylvania and New York to Lake Ontario, and again in 1765 and 1766 through the Floridas. Each of these expeditions resulted in a book of narration and description, having indeed no literary merit besides simplicity and directness of statement, but interesting and good as the jottings of an eager naturalist while passing through a new world.

As John Bartram represents high attainments in science reached under all outward disadvantages, so John Winthrop of Harvard College represents still higher attainments in science reached under all outward advantages. A descendant of the first governor of Massachusetts, and thus belonging to a race in which the study of nature was an hereditary passion, he was graduated at Harvard in 1732, at the age of seventeen; and from 1738 until his death in 1779, he served his Alma Mater with great distinction as professor of mathematics and natural philosophy. For

¹ J. A. Allibone, "Dictionary of Authors," art. J. Bartram.

extent and depth of learning in his special departments, he was probably the foremost American of his day; and in other departments—history, literature, theology, languages, politics—he had made great acquisitions. During his long career at the college, he was the inspirer of his pupils, as well as their guide. His aspect was very noble, having in it both dignity and tenderness; and those who looked upon him saw realized their highest conceptions of the sage and the gentleman. He had an exquisite faculty of giving instruction; one who was both his pupil and associate said of him that “each new lecture was a new revelation.”¹ His life was given to research and to oral instruction rather than to the writing of books; yet he published several small works, all upon scientific subjects, and all occasioned by events that then occurred in the earth or the heavens—earthquakes, comets, meteors, and the transits of Venus. These writings are models of scientific exposition,—thorough, simple, terse, lucid, graceful, having an occasional stroke of poetic beauty in epithet, often rising into an effortless and serene eloquence. His manner of reasoning is as noble as his manner of utterance; modest, judicial, never heedless or dictatorial in statement, never exaggerating scientific conjectures into scientific facts, never insisting upon immoderate inferences from his scientific facts. All things considered, he was probably the most symmetrical example both of scientific and of literary culture produced in America during the colonial time; representing what was highest and broadest in it, what was most robust and most delicate; a thinker and a writer born and bred in a province, but neither in thought nor in speech provincial; an American student of nature and of human nature, who stayed at home, and bringing Europe and the universe to his own door, made himself cosmopolitan.

Thus, from the earliest moment of American civilization,

¹ Professor Stephen Sewall, Funeral Oration, 4.

there were, here and there in this country, eager and keen students of nature,—their number greatly multiplying with the passing of the years. But it belongs to the essence of such studies that they who pursue them should seek the fellowship of their own brethren, either for help in solving difficulties or for delight in announcing discoveries; and it is, beyond question, true, that the union of the American colonies was first laid in the friendly correspondence and intellectual sympathies of students of physical science, who from an early day were dispersed through these colonies, and who, even before commerce, or politics, or religion had overstepped the barriers between them, had sought one another out in their scattered homes, and had begun those generous interchanges of scientific information, which were a joy in themselves, and which led to many other beneficent forms of intercolonial acquaintance.

By the year 1740, the American students of nature had become a multitude; and from that year to the year 1765, the glory of physical research among us culminated in the brilliant achievements of Benjamin Franklin, whose good fortune it then was to enable his country to step at once to the van of scientific discovery, and for a few years to be the teacher of the world on the one topic of physical inquiry then uppermost in men's thoughts. In 1754, the leading physicists of France—Buffon, Marty, Dubourg, Fonferrière, Dalibard—paused in their studies, and sent across the ocean this reverent word to the great physicist of America: "We are all waiting with the greatest eagerness to hear from you."¹ Nine years before that, in proposing the formation of "The American Philosophical Society," this wonderful man had announced to his own countrymen that the time had come for them to make new and greater exertions for the enlargement of human knowledge: "The first drudgery of settling new colonies . . . is now pretty well over; and there are many

¹ Works of Franklin, VI. 194.

in every province in circumstances that set them at ease, and afford leisure to cultivate the finer arts, and improve the common stock of knowledge."¹ Inspired by the noble enthusiasm of Franklin, whose position brought him into large personal acquaintance in all the colonies, the activity and the range of scientific studies in America were then greatly increased. Alexander Garden, James Logan, Thomas Bond, John Bard, John Bartram, Ebenezer Kinnersley, Lewis Evans, Thomas Godfrey, James Alexander, Cadwallader Colden, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Clap, Jared Eliot, Paul Dudley, John Winthrop, were, in those years, with Franklin, the leading students of nature in this country, who, in colonies the most remote from one another, were pushing forward similar researches, and who found in these researches a bond of scientific communion that helped to prepare the way for political communion—whenever the hour for that should come.

The direct impulse given by all this eager study of physical science to the development of American literature is to be seen not only in scientific writings like those of Winthrop and of Franklin, which have high and peculiar literary merit, but in the general invigoration of American thought, in the development of a sturdy rational spirit, and in a broadening of the field of our intellectual vision.

VI.

In spite of all these influences working toward colonial fellowship, the prevailing fact in American life, down to the year 1765, was colonial isolation. With that year came the immense event that suddenly swept nearly all minds in the several colonies into the same great current of absorbing thought, and that held them there for nearly twenty years. From the date of that event, we cease to concern ourselves with an American literature in the east

¹ Works, VI. 14.

or the south, in this colony or in that. Henceforward American literature flows in one great, common stream, and not in petty rills of geographical discrimination. Our future studies will deal with the literature of one multitudinous people, variegated, indeed, in personal traits, but single in its commanding ideas and in its national destinies.

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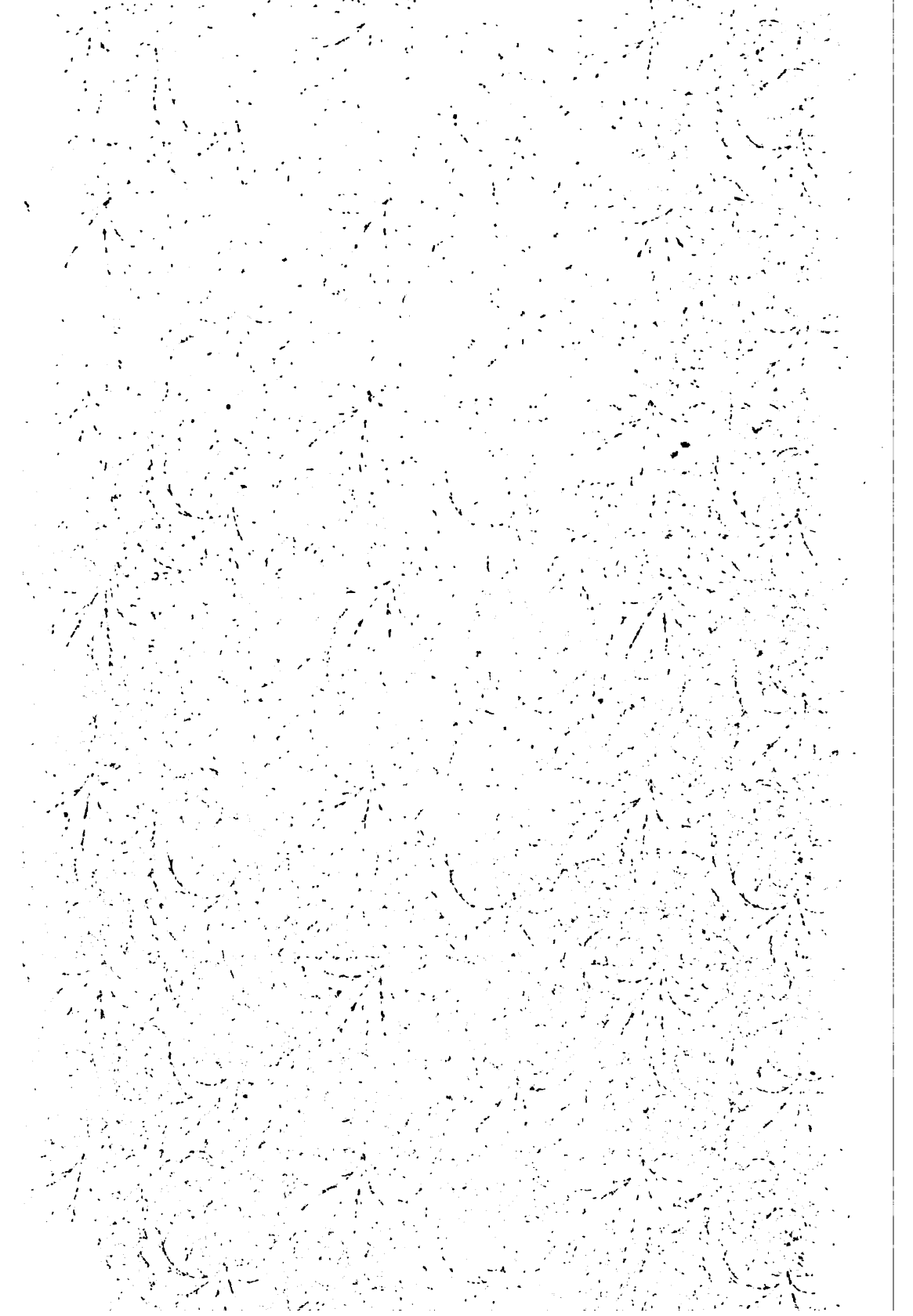
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